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Personal Salvation

A Treatment of the Doctrines of
Conversion and Christian
Experience

By
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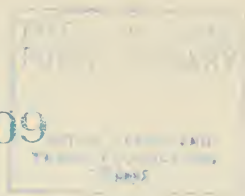


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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO A
METHODIST ANCESTRY
THAT FOR
FIVE GENERATIONS HAS ENJOYED THE POWER
AND
UPHELD THE DOCTRINES
OF
PERSONAL SALVATION

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PREFACE

A COMPREHENSIVE grasp of truth and a strong and adequate style of expression are essential features of a helpful book, but the one great content that gives it life and inspiration is the personality of the writer, the *Some one*, who lives on every page, whose soul beats against the limitations of language as an eagle beats against the bars of his cage in vain search of a free pathway to the open hill country and the shining sun. For this reason every really great book except the Bible "seems to be a vain attempt to do the impossible." The writer of this book, therefore, will be greatly pleased if some of his readers find that he has suggested and attempted more

than he has been able to complete. Books treating of Christian experience are quite plentiful, but none of them satisfy any large portion of the Christian Church. There are two reasons for this: (1) Without the direct inspiration of God a man cannot write a book greater than himself, nor can he give clear and living expression to any spiritual truth until it has become a vital part of his own life. No one, as yet, has been able to realize in his personal religious life all of the facts of Christian experience expressed or implied in the Scriptures, nor can any one man know all the phases of experience which obtain among the various members of the great Christian Brotherhood. All that one Christian can do is to put his own experience in order and send it forth as a personal message to his brethren. (2) But since salvation is a personal, living process

it cannot, for that very reason, be put into words. The scientist can describe every little detail of the growth of a plant, but he can tell nothing of the living power which makes the growth. The effects are seen, the cause remains a great mystery. Hence the weakness of all treatment of Christian experience.

Conscious of these limitations, the writer still hopes that this book does give somewhat adequate expression to a common type of Christian experience. He also hopes that by means of it some may be helped to a better understanding of the truth and of themselves, and that increased knowledge may lead to stronger and deeper spiritual life. To obtain a well-balanced view of Methodist teaching on this important subject there may be read in connection with this book four Methodist classics, written by men of ma-

ture thought and experience, namely, *Love Enthroned*, by Dr. Daniel Steele; *Aspects of Christian Experience*, by Bishop S. M. Merrill; *Philosophy of Christian Experience*, by Bishop Randolph S. Foster; *The New and Living Way*, by Professor Milton S. Terry.

Theological definitions are at present in some disfavor. The present writer believes, however, that knowledge and belief precede experience and character; that definite thinking and exact knowledge are necessary to definite experience; that a vague, loose, indefinite style of thought and speech is degrading and immoral. The names of the events of Christian experience are in common use, and yet very few have any clear idea of their meaning. Nor is this ignorance entirely confined to the laity. Very many writers and speakers use statements and make explanations that

indicate very great confusion or very great error. Figures of speech have been so abused that their use has added to the confusion and concealed the truth instead of revealing it. Some have gone so far as to build a whole system of doctrines on a metaphor. Things are not clearly seen across a landscape covered with fog; progress under such conditions is slow, uncertain, and dangerous. Believing that definitions will help to clear up the situation, they have been freely used. A pathway through the forest may restrict freedom and limit the view, yet it is an aid to most travelers who desire to arrive somewhere. These definitions have proven so helpful to the writer in his own experience and have added so much to the value of his preaching that he feels it both a duty and a pleasure to give them as large an audience as possible. The definitions are,

however, to be looked upon not as final statements of the whole truth, but as definite measures of the light we now have, and, like the clear outline of the new moon, a prophecy of fuller light to come. This partial but clearly defined outline is more encouraging to the ordinary traveler than the greater but fragmentary light of the great nebula ; it is nearer by and more concentrated, and therefore gives greater promise of immediate helpfulness, even though it may not have such great possibilities. We will do the best we can with the light at hand while waiting for the nebula to organize. Indeed, it is to be hoped that some mighty spirit may soon move upon the great nebulous mass of much that passes for Christian thinking and reduce to order that formless void. The writer hastens to say that these definitions are not his own, but that wherever

they appear placed in quotation marks and not otherwise credited they are by Professor Olin A. Curtis, to whom is acknowledged a very great indebtedness for the outline of conversion. But beyond this outline and the definitions this work does not pretend to give any of Dr. Curtis's views.

The claim is not made that every conversion must exactly fit the plan here given, or even that many conversions will be as clear and definite in every detail. The writer was converted when eleven years of age, and he is very sure that the repentance and faith exercised were far below the demands of this treatise. But as he grew older and obtained a clearer idea of his personal accountability, and a better conception of God, the repentance and faith took on a new and deeper meaning, and with every increase of knowledge

and new apprehension of God there has come a new and better adjustment of his whole religious experience. Within the past year a study of the minor prophets has given a great and new content to his conception of God, and as a result repentance and faith and the whole range of experience have taken on a deeper meaning. The writer speaks of personal salvation as he now knows it. This personal element may account for the persistent and perhaps over urging of some of the points. Some readers may not need to trim the statements to their experience, while others may need to bring their experience into line with the statements herein, even though in some cases they be overurged.

Holland's Island, Md.,

January, 1903.

Personal Salvation

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTIAN

THE words "Christian" and "Christianity" are used in so many senses, and so generally in a vague and indefinite way, that great confusion as to their real meaning has resulted. A consultation of encyclopedias and dictionaries only helps to increase the confusion. Some years ago a Christian weekly sent to a number of representative men and women the following question: "What is it to be a Christian?" Some thirty replies were received. Bishop Randolph S. Foster says that while this is a demand for a definition, yet not one of the thirty responses is a definition, although some approximate

it, and not one is satisfactory. The confusion on this subject has been greatly increased by such books as *The Christian*, by Hall Caine, and *Robert Elsmere*, by Mrs. Ward, and by the rise of several societies of good people who are conscientiously trying to practice the teachings of Christ but who have missed the vital center of the Christian religion. The words under discussion ought to have a precise and definite meaning, and it is our present task to find out what that meaning may be. If the fog on our horizon can be driven away we may be able to run a straight course with clear sailing.

A man is not born a Christian, but he becomes one by making real in his own life the Christian religion. Hence it is evident that we must define Christianity before we can define the Christian.

We have not touched the central fact of Christianity when we think of it as a new and better way of living, nor even when

we regard it as the fullest and completest revelation of God. It is both of these, but only incidentally. These do not exhaust or even truly represent those parts of the New Testament upon which the most emphasis is placed. We must go deeper for the real meaning of Christianity. The real truth and the vital message of the New Testament lie here: "*Mankind is a racial brotherhood of moral persons. Christianity is a deed—it is God in action to save this brotherhood of man; a deed of infinite sorrow and self-sacrifice on the part of God; a deed made absolutely necessary by the entrance of sin, which has entered the personal life of man and broken up his relation with the Father, and which has also entered man's social life and broken up God's original plan of brotherhood. The religion of Christianity is an actual rescue from sin of a personal moral brotherhood, at infinite cost in self-sacrifice on the part of God.*" With this adequate and comprehensive definition

of Christianity clearly before us we can suggest a definition for the term "Christian" that will be sufficiently inclusive and exclusive.

A Christian is a man whose religious life is marked by three definite characteristics: (1) A definite belief in the atonement as an act of rescue performed by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with a belief in the doctrines growing out of the atonement; (2) a definite act of faith by which the atonement in Christ is appropriated as a personal rescue, and a definite experience of acceptance with God, including freedom from sin and birth into the family of God, with conscious knowledge of the same; (3) a definite course of conduct, entirely controlled and ruled by motives growing out of the definite belief and the definite experience.

THE DEFINITE BELIEF

The entrance into the inner temple of Christianity is through the door of belief,

and without this belief there can be no farther progress. There cannot be an act of faith and a definite experience without the necessary mental grasp of the truth. The rescue from sin is possible to none but believers. There are certain things that a Christian believes that distinguish him from all other men. To a large part of his belief others may give assent, but he holds some central convictions which are the essential marks of Christianity. The Christian creed may be briefly summed up as follows: A definite belief in the Trinity, one God in three Persons, Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of all things. To this God man owes perfect love and obedience. God has revealed himself to man in nature, in conscience, in history, and in the Holy Scriptures. The most complete revelation of God is in the work and person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a normal human

life, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Of his life and teaching the four gospels give an adequate and accurate account. He is the Saviour of the human race, his Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension being the great deeds by which he made atonement for sin, and rescued the human brotherhood. He will come again at the end of the world. The dead will all be raised and all men will be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and the good and the bad will be separated both as to place and condition. God has set his seal upon the Holy Scriptures as an accurate record of the preparation for and the accomplishment of the great deed of redemption. All of these things a man must believe in order to call his creed Christian. But the center of the whole is the belief in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by his infinite self-sacrifice made a real atonement for sin and accom-

plished the deed of redemption. With this fundamental doctrine firmly held, the others fall in order about it. Nothing short of this can be accepted as true Christian belief. On the way to Damascus Paul was convinced of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, and that, having been crucified, dead, and buried, he was risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. At that moment his belief, which had been Jewish, became Christian.

It is one mission of the Holy Spirit to testify to the truth of these doctrines concerning the Christ. When a man is truly and earnestly hungering for God and is sincerely seeking a rescue from sin—when such a man hears the doctrines of the Gospel presented the Holy Spirit in some way convinces that man of the truth of the redemption in Jesus Christ and the way to God through him. The evangelist is sent into the world to announce the doctrines concerning the

Christ in order that the Holy Spirit may interpret them to such as seek to know God and the power of his redemption.

A DEFINITE EXPERIENCE

With his belief as a starting point, the man who becomes a Christian must actually pass through the process of rescue, must experience the power of the divinely provided redemption. The process of rescue is often called conversion, although the word "conversion" may only properly include a part of the mental process. "Experience" is a word in common use in our own Church to designate the "internal states and feelings through which one has passed or is now passing" in the process of rescue from sin. An experience is an actual affair through which a man has passed. He knows it for himself; he does not need anyone to tell him about it. Now, the Christian has had a certain definite experience, certain states and feelings through which he has actually

passed which have become real facts in his life. They make his religious life very different from the religious life of one who has not had this experience. The experience which makes a man a normal Christian includes: (1) A definite conviction of sin as rebellion against the holy God, with a knowledge of the divine displeasure and a fear of punishment from which he has no power to rescue himself; (2) a definite repentance, in which he loathes his sin and with a contrite heart turns away from it because it is displeasing to God; (3) a definite consciousness that in Jesus Christ God offers him a complete rescue, including pardon and restoration; (4) a definite act of faith by which he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour and gives his whole self to Christ, thus trusting himself to the divine rescue and resting upon it; (5) a definite witness within that he is accepted of God and is now a member of God's family; (6) a definite consciousness of power

over sin, whether presented by outward temptation or inward suggestion.

The man who has had this experience has passed through the process of rescue and is a Christian. Paul had all of these "internal states and feelings" and bore testimony to them. He could not have had them unless his belief had passed from Jewish to Christian. This experience never loses its freshness and power. It is always present, always new. Nor is it necessarily all secured at once. A partial belief may give a partial experience, and as belief deepens the experience will become more definite. And the experience always reacts upon the belief, making it clearer and stronger, until it practically becomes knowledge rather than mere belief. This will be discussed more at length in the chapter on "Christian Assurance."

A DEFINITE COURSE OF LIFE

To continue to be a Christian a man must bring his conduct into subjection to

the belief and the experience. Not every well-meant life is a Christian life. The doctrines of Christianity and the experience of the personal rescue bring into the man's life certain great motives, and it is only as these motives rule in his life that he is a Christian. These motives gather up all lesser interests and compel the thought and affections to subject themselves to the one great motive of love and loyalty to Jesus Christ. By reason of the rescue from sin the man has been restored to the right relation with the Father, and has also become a vital center in the new holy brotherhood which the Father is organizing about Jesus Christ, the Elder Brother. Hence this definite life has a peculiar relation to God and to our fellow-men. In relation to the Father it is a life of blessed communion, of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, of loving service and obedience; a life of freedom, since he is no longer "under bondage," but is become a child of God. In relation to our

fellow-men it is a life of fellowship and love and service, its one great characteristic being a spirit of self-sacrifice in behalf of the brotherhood of man. "Hereby know we love because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The Master has summed it all up in one sentence: "As Thou didst send me into the world, even so send I them into the world." A convert at Jerry McAuley's prayer meeting had the true spirit of Christianity when he said, "Jesus Christ died to give you a show. If you want to follow him get onto his cross and suffer, your own self, for some poor chap that is worse than you are."

Thus a man becomes a Christian. God furnishes the facts for the belief, he provides the opportunity and the power for the experience, he supplies the power for the life; by faith the Christian appropriates them and makes them his own.

The Christian religion is a necessity in

the development of manhood. The Christian is not an artificial, morbid, unhealthy, cranky "saint." He is a sane, healthy, normal, developed man. The passage of the individual through the entire process of rescue is sometimes rapid and sometimes slow. The time required depends upon the man and the conditions surrounding him. But in every case the real process is wholesome, rational, vital, and free from artificial, factitious, mechanical elements. In so far as such elements are present the real process of rescue is hindered. The Christian religion is adapted to man and fits into his life without doing any violence to conscience or any other part of the moral nature. "It will meet a man at any stage of the moral process and start him on toward the goal."

The following chapters will deal with the events of the Christian's experience, describing the states and feelings and naming the stages through which he

passes. They will tell what happens to a man as he passes through the process of an actual rescue from sin and its results. It is not claimed that every case of conversion must exactly fit this outline, but the type is a real one, and the stages here described are actually present in every case even though the convert may not be conscious of them.

There are no better names to be found for the stages of the spiritual life than those in common use, hence there has been no hesitation in using them. But it is hoped that this explanation will help to a clearer understanding of their meaning and free them from some objectionable ideas which have gathered about them. Every effort will be made to make the reader feel that we are talking about him rather than talking theology.

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CHAPTER II

PREPARATION FOR CONVERSION

CONVERSION is the process of personal salvation; it is that "spiritual and moral change attending a change of attitude toward God; a change of heart; a change from the service of the world to the service of God; a change of the ruling disposition of the soul, involving a transformation of the outward life." There is a vast difference between a real conversion and a desire or determination to lead a new life. Conversion means the whole of the process of the rescue from sin. Its starting point is repentance; its goal is a mind, heart, and will entirely loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ, thus making the convert a member of the family of God, of the new brotherhood which God is organizing about Christ, the Saviour. In addition to the above there is also in con-

version a new birth, an impartation of a divine life, which will in its completion make of the loyal person a holy person, thus bringing him to the second goal of the Christian life.

The preparation for conversion is that combination of influences which, acting upon the person, brings him squarely up to the house of rescue, into which he may enter through the door of repentance. In this preparation, as in all of God's dealings with man, there are both human and divine elements. God uses human agencies and he also works directly within the soul. The human agencies are the influence of individuals, the influence of the Church, and the bearing of the man himself. As a direct work of God there is the enlightenment of the spiritual understanding, the awakening of a personal interest in salvation, the conviction of sin, and the gracious invitation to accept Christ and secure forgiveness and peace with God. All of these precede repentance

and are a preparation for it. They are not imaginary or theological pictures. They are real experiences in the life of every one who is under the influence of the Christian Church and the Gospel message. God does everything he can do to secure the rescue of every human being.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN SIDE OF THE PREPARATION

I. THE INFLUENCE OF INDIVIDUALS

“No action, whether foul or fair,
Is ever done but it leaves somewhere
A record
In the greater weakness or the greater strength
Of all the acts which follow it.”

EVERY man has more or less influence in helping other men to meet God at the place of rescue or in keeping men away from God. A man's neighbors help in many ways to determine the time, the form, and the place of the test by which his final destiny is decided. Every indifferent person, everyone who has rejected the divine rescue, has a harmful influence upon those about him. Every person who has accepted God helps to bring others to the place of acceptance. By the righteousness of his life, by his fidelity in thought, word, and deed to the Christian spirit, by

the moral power inherent in Christian character, by the word of testimony, by the feeling and expression of a profound personal interest in his neighbor, the Christian constantly influences others and helps God to secure their salvation. The Christian exerts this influence when he is entirely unconscious of it as well as when he is actively engaged in urging others to accept Christ. God can use our lives as well as our words to help others. Sometimes the unconscious influence is most effective. Many a person has been helped over a hard place on the road to God by a friendly word, a kind invitation, a brotherly act, or even by a hearty handshake or a cheerful Christian smile. Also every dishonest or unfaithful act on the part of a Christian has a tendency to prevent others from seeing the Christ and accepting him. So we find that the personal bearing of individuals, and especially the bearing of Christians, has a great influence in the preparation for conversion.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH

In bringing men to the place of repentance the church as an organization exerts an influence which far exceeds the sum total of the influence of its individual members. There are certain great conditions of church worship which, if fully met, would result in constant conversions. When in the beauty of holiness God is worshiped in spirit and in truth, and the fellowship of brotherly love goes from heart to heart, then the Holy Spirit is present in such power that every sinner within its influence will feel the shock and be brought to an immediate decision. This influence, secured by the presence of the Holy Spirit, is a power over the consciences of men which lays their hearts open before them and brings them face to face with God. The power is always present when the conditions are met: sincere, holy worship and brotherly love. Until then no amount of prayer for the

power of the Holy Spirit can secure it, but prayer may be a large factor in securing the proper conditions. The one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room did not spend the ten days in beseeching a coy spirit to move, but in learning the spirit of Christ, in getting into loving relations with one another, in *worshiping God "with one accord."* When the power came each one received his portion. When a church meets the conditions it will receive a Pentecost—not to talk about, but to use in the conversion of the world. When this power is present its influence cannot be resisted. Men will be pricked in their hearts and will ask what they must do to be saved. The children in the Sunday school will have their share of the power, and will carry it home with them to disturb the parents who are not churchgoers. This power will even follow a missionary offering halfway around the world and make it effective in securing the rescue of the heathen.

The church has not to-day, and never has had, a full measure of this power, this grip on the consciences of men. Perhaps one reason why the church has so little power is because those who seek the power seek it for themselves rather than for the church as a unit. One reason surely lies in the spirit of wordliness and selfishness which sometimes pervades a church. Remember that this power is not identical with the special indwelling of the Holy Spirit which is the privilege of each believer, nor yet with the peculiar manifestation of the Spirit given to those who have passed to the second goal, Christian holiness, although it is a blessing given by the same Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." It is a little unnatural and mechanical to suppose that the one hundred and twenty were all in exactly the same stage of Christian experience, yet they all received the baptism of power because it took all of them to make the church and meet the

conditions. The power we are speaking of is a power in the church secured by meeting the conditions of church service. This power may not exhaust the gift of Pentecost, yet it is one separate and distinct result of the Pentecost.

The church of the present time is conscious of its weakness in this respect, and in some cases is attempting to supply the deficiency and secure the desired results by making activity and service a substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit. The institutional church does a good work, but its activity is a poor substitute for the power of the Holy Ghost and cannot secure the real work of rescue from sin. A well-equipped church with abundant activity may be very prosperous and very pleasing, but it must not forget that the real power in its service lies in the presence of the Holy Spirit. When a child is sick we do all we can to amuse and comfort him, but we do not imagine for a moment that by so doing we have

touched the disease. Keeping the child in a quiet and cheerful frame of mind may assist nature, but something else is needed to arrest the progress of death. So the helpful and elevating influences and activities of the institutional church may help to bring men under the influence of the Gospel, but the dreadful disease of sin is not touched until the Holy Spirit is present. There can be no substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit in bringing men to repentance. The Spirit will manifest his power in any church, however poor and humble, whenever the conditions are met. The church has a great influence in the preparation for conversion.

III. PERSONAL BEARING OF THE SINNER

Man is not able to rescue himself, yet he can determine to some extent the time of his conversion. Certain states of mind must always precede repentance. A certain amount of spiritual knowledge must be present before there can be a definite

conviction of sin, without which there cannot be true repentance. Now, a man may try to keep himself away from all spiritual influences. He cannot entirely escape the influence of individuals nor of a holy church, yet his individual bearing toward the truth will partly determine the time and place of his spiritual crises. It is true that he cannot at all escape the direct work of God in bringing him to the place of rescue, yet, since God works as much as possible through human agencies, the bearing of the man himself will help to determine the time when God will consider it most opportune to bring a spiritual crisis upon him. The personal attitude of the man toward sin and righteousness will also have much to do with the quality of his spiritual knowledge.

It is a profound and important law of moral development that by doing right a man may bring himself to a state of moral unrest. The approval of conscience, if

faithfully sought, will finally become disapproval, and, while there is a vast difference between the ordinary condemnation of conscience and the conviction of sin, yet this peculiar disapproval is really the beginning of a conviction of sin and presents an opportunity for a new and better life. The explanation is this: By obeying conscience the moral faculties are quickened and the moral ideal mercilessly expands until finally the moral man comes to a place where he demands of himself a perfect moral life; perfect not only in fragmentary moral deeds, but perfect in a "personal bearing toward right as a total thing." It is impossible for the man to meet this constantly increasing demand of his moral nature, and unless he decides to give the whole thing up he speedily comes to the point where he is profoundly conscious of his need of help. The feeling that some help is necessary gives the ever-present Holy Spirit an opportunity to enlighten the man and bring clearly be-

fore him the plan of rescue, which includes forgiveness for all past sins and the impartation of such help as will enable him to meet the demand of his constantly growing ideal, thus keeping him free from future sin. The process of conversion does not change the moral process. There is the change of attitude caused by the new relation to Christ and the necessary help is granted, otherwise the moral development continues as before. In conversion the total man is gathered up and started on toward the last goal of a perfect manhood. So the bearing of the man himself is a very important factor in the preparation for conversion.

But, while these human elements in the preparation are very potent, the ruling power is not in human hands. With or without the help of individuals, of the church, or of the man himself, God works with the man and at opportune times brings a test upon him, compelling him to

decide one way or the other. So we turn to the work of God, in this preparation for conversion, and find it complete and perfectly adapted to secure the desired result.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

THE possession of spiritual knowledge is a necessary preparation for conversion. A man cannot have a personal interest in salvation unless he knows something about it. There cannot be conviction of sin without knowledge of God. There cannot be a wise choice in which Christ is accepted unless there is sufficient knowledge to give a keen appreciation of the importance of the situation. This enlightenment must amount to real spiritual discernment or it is not sufficient. This opening of the spiritual eyes and quickening of the spiritual perceptions is secured by the ordinary working of conscience and by the direct work of the Holy Spirit.

This is not the place for a discussion of conscience, nor even for a definition of it. It is, however, in a very true sense the

voice of God speaking in the human soul, teaching it righteousness and leading it toward God. While it may not teach man what the right is, it always gives an impulse toward right action whenever the right is known, or approved by the moral judgment. By fidelity to conscience a man not only sharpens his moral perceptions, and enlightens and develops his moral nature, but he also gives the Holy Spirit opportunity to impart knowledge and make spiritual impressions.

The Holy Spirit is man's greatest teacher in spiritual things. If conscience does not tell what the right is the Holy Spirit can and does so teach us. In earliest childhood the Holy Spirit begins this spiritual enlightenment, and he never leaves us until, by continued rejection and a settled course of sin, spiritual knowledge is made impossible. No man in any age, country, or condition has been without the influence of the Holy Spirit in his heart and life. We used to hear about the

“natural man” whose very virtues were sins, and who could not do anything good if he wanted to, because he had not the Holy Spirit. There never was such a man and never will be. He was a theological fiction. Such a man would be very “unnatural;” the natural condition of man is that the Holy Spirit is always present with him, seeking opportunity to teach spiritual truth, to make spiritual impressions, to impart spiritual knowledge, to sharpen the spiritual perceptions, to open the eyes and prepare the heart, to help the whole man to see God and to influence the whole man to accept God. “Man was not made to live alone, he was made to live under the moral law with help.” God will not leave a man alone when he is in the greatest need of help, even though the greater need be occasioned by man’s sin. God will not leave a man alone so long as help will be of any benefit to him. A foolish woman said that she would like to go to hell because there

would be some one there that she could help. She was mistaken. If there was any help for them they would not be there. Let her consider Calvary and learn a little wisdom in spiritual things. Our God is not the kind of a God that will forsake a man when he is in need of help. Indeed, God will not forsake him even though he be past help. The final state of the wicked, with its "outer darkness" and "unquenchable fire" and its "weeping and gnashing of teeth," will be just as comfortable as infinite love can make such a place.

Because he usually works through the ordinary events of life the Holy Spirit is spoken of as "seeking opportunity." The Holy Spirit touches something the man already knows, lifts it up, gives it a new meaning, and shows it in new and more exalted relations. It is very evident that the great work of the Holy Spirit in enlightenment is among those people to whom the Gospel is preached, since the

hearing of Christian truth gives the Holy Spirit so much better material to work with. Also, the Christian religion being God's method of rescue, the Holy Spirit is present with it in a very peculiar manner. The Holy Spirit is sent to show us the things of Christ, and the essential truths of Christianity cannot be perceived unless the Holy Spirit interpret them to our hearts.

The Holy Spirit never gives a man up until by continued rejections and by a settled course of disobedience he makes it impossible for spiritual impressions to be received. Sin blunts and weakens and, if willfully persisted in, finally destroys the whole moral nature, making all spiritual knowledge and all spiritual action impossible. In such a case there is no help.

A man can greatly help in the work of enlightenment by placing himself in the way of spiritual knowledge. By church attendance, by prayer, by Bible reading, by helping others, by serious meditation,

opportunity is given to the Holy Spirit to prepare the man for rescue. Every Bible verse committed to memory, every song or testimony held in the mind, is a magazine of explosives to which the Holy Spirit may at any moment apply a spark and shake the soul to its very foundations. By carelessness and frivolity, by sin and selfishness, the Holy Spirit is grieved and he may even depart for a season.

The Holy Spirit does not always wait for opportunities. He sometimes forces the truth upon the heart and mind in quiet or in violent ways. If we will not hear the still small voice the earthquake or the whirlwind may compel attention.

So the man and conscience and the Holy Spirit work together. This is beautifully illustrated by an incident quoted by Canon Farrar. A man well known for his good works tells this anecdote of his childhood: "When I was a little boy, in my fourth year, one fine day in spring my father led me by the hand to a distant part

of the farm, but soon sent me home alone. On the way I had to pass a little pond. A rhodora in full bloom, a rare flower which grew only in that locality, attracted my attention and drew me to the spot. I saw a little tortoise sunning himself in the shallow water at the foot of the flaming shrub. I lifted the stick I had in my hand to strike the harmless reptile; for, though I had never killed any creature, I had seen other boys do so, and I felt a disposition to follow their wicked example. But all at once something checked my little arm, and a voice within me said, clear and loud, 'It is wrong.' I held my uplifted stick in wonder at the new emotion, conscious of an involuntary but inward check upon my actions, till the tortoise and the rhodora had passed from my sight. I hastened home and told the tale to my mother and asked her what it was that told me it was wrong. Taking me in her arms, she said, 'Some men call it conscience; but I prefer to call it the voice of

God. If you listen and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear, or disobey, then it will fade out little by little and leave you in the dark and without a guide.' ” The mother was right. It was not conscience, it was the Holy Spirit speaking directly to the child. Conscience was present and active, but the voice was the Holy Spirit embracing that opportunity to enlighten the child. The result was a quickened conscience and an enlightened moral nature. Just so God enlightens the heart and mind of the sinner, teaching him the truth about himself and about God, preparing him for the great work of personal salvation.

The work of the Holy Spirit in imparting spiritual knowledge is not confined to the preparation for conversion. It continues throughout the whole of the Christian life; the new relation to Christ secured by the conversion giving the Holy Spirit a new and much better opportunity

to teach and train. At present we are only concerned with the enlightenment as a preparation for conversion. As we follow the work of preparation we will see its value. When the enlightenment has proceeded so far, and the time is propitious, the Holy Spirit awakens a personal interest in salvation. This condition of awakened interest gives opportunity for a new enlightenment in which finally a vision of God is flashed before the man, producing conviction of sin, which in turn is followed by a new enlightenment leading up to a gracious invitation to accept Christ as a means of rescue. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

THE enlightenment of the spiritual understanding is followed by a state of awakened interest in God and in personal salvation. This feeling of personal interest is produced partly by the presence of the spiritual knowledge and partly by a direct work of the Holy Spirit. The soul was made to enjoy communion with God, and spiritual knowledge arouses and stirs the dormant powers and the man begins to hunger after God and has a lively personal interest in securing a proper relation with him. This feeling of personal interest, aroused by a taste of spiritual knowledge, gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to impart a larger measure of knowledge and also to increase and deepen the personal interest by quickening it with his own divine life, thus making it

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a real work of grace. God is bringing the man to the place of decision under the most favorable conditions. That he may have the best opportunity to come into the kingdom, God takes up the soul's first feeble movements to know itself, fills them with his own power, and creates in the man's heart a fervent desire for a rescue from sin and for a right relation with God. The Holy Spirit, if not resisted, also imparts to the man such a spirit of teachableness and humility that he will keep himself under the divine teaching, so that the testing time, when it comes, finds the man thoroughly prepared.

Thus the man begins to show an interest in spiritual things. He goes to church every Sunday and gives attention to the whole service. He reads his Bible and loves spiritual hymns. The way seems all clear and easy before him. His friends are encouraged. Boldly he starts out from the City of Destruction, and the Celestial City seems almost in sight. Just

before him, however, is the Slough of Despond, and every step toward God brings him nearer to that sad and bitter experience from which there is no escape. His awakened condition is a real desire to know God, but when God meets that desire with a larger vision of himself, like Isaiah in the temple he falls on his face and cries, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

A great mistake is often made in dealing with people in this awakened condition. This aroused and increased interest is sometimes mistaken for conversion, and as a result of this mistake at the beginning the whole religious life is involved in confusion and perplexity. One reason why so many converts do not "hold out" is that they were never truly converted. In some way awakening was mistaken for conversion, and they were left in a peril-

ous condition. We can trust God in his grace and tender mercy to carefully watch over such misguided ones, but that will not relieve from responsibility the unwise or ignorant spiritual teachers who sometimes become more interested in figures than in profound spiritual results. But the mistake is sometimes very innocently made. One of the great benefits of the "mourners' bench" is that those who come out from their seats and make a definite separation from their old selves are much less likely to make this mistake, and much more likely to "come through," than are those who hold up their hands, or sign a card, or even stand up for prayers. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that a desire or even a resolution to lead a new life is not conversion in the sense of a rescue from sin. The desire and the resolution are good and necessary, but they mark a stage in the preparation for the rescue. The resolution to live a new life will bring the soul face to face with God,

and if persisted in will lead the man to the rescue from sin. Paul did not make the mistake of thinking that he was in Rome when he came to the "Three Taverns," but he "thanked God and took courage," and so went on toward Rome.

This mistake produces confusing and sometimes disastrous results. The seeker has been told, and told truly, that certain definite effects follow conversion. He does not find these results in his own experience, and is very likely to think that the Christian experience he has heard about is purely imaginary. This misconception may easily prevent any further work of the Spirit at that time, and on account of the blunder that opportunity for rescue is lost. Other opportunities will come, but they do not excuse the blunder. Valuable time also is lost.

Another grave error growing out of this mistake is not uncommon. Some are faithful to the resolution to lead a new life and are brought to a true conversion

later, in spite of the bewilderment growing out of the mistake. Thinking that they had been converted previously, they call the true conversion the "second blessing" of entire sanctification, thus bringing confusion into their own experience and greater confusion into the doctrine of holiness. This treatise stoutly maintains the doctrine of Christian holiness as the second goal of the Christian life. By the very nature of the case, a man cannot attain the experience of Christian holiness until after he has passed through the experience of conversion, by which he becomes loyal to Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it is very evident that many who describe the experience of sanctification and compare it with the regenerate state are only describing conversion and comparing it with the state of awakened interest, in which there is a desire and an attempt to live in right relations with God. For this reason this word of caution is introduced. Parents, preachers,

teachers, and evangelists are exhorted to be careful of this point and not repeat the mistake.

The first profound religious awakening generally occurs in the period of adolescence, between the years of ten and twenty. To children in Christian homes, with good home and church training, it may, and often does, come much earlier. But most frequently the first deep spiritual awakening occurs in the period of youth, at which time there is an enlarged and awakened interest in all the relations of life. At this time there is a rapid development of the moral nature. Sometimes within this period the person comes to moral freedom and is conscious of his moral responsibility. The moral nature, as well as the social nature, seeks to find its bearings and to establish itself in right relations. To the youth with the moral powers developing within him comes the Holy Spirit, enlightening the mind, instructing the moral judgment, gathering

up the scattered and feeble spiritual powers, and centering them in a profound personal interest in God and personal salvation. This period of awakened interest presents to the church and to the parents their great opportunity. By far the greater majority of Christians were converted before they were twenty years of age. The parents, the pastor, the Sunday school teacher, should all give attention to this fact, and see that those under their care are tenderly cared for and wisely and carefully led to Christ, the blessed Lord and Saviour, immediately upon the first awakening of interest in religious things. The Christian teaching and training should begin in early childhood with the expectation of seeing a real conversion and a settled spiritual life before the age of manhood or womanhood. This awakened condition has been known to come to children not more than six years of age.

Great wisdom is required in dealing with children in the period of awakened

religious interest. The sensitive tenderness of the young heart is increased by the vague unrest of the youthful period and also by the influence of the Holy Spirit gently ministering to the newly born spiritual powers. The whole attention should be directed to Christ and centered upon him, and the will persuaded to accept and trust him. There should be no morbid self-inspection or self-consciousness. This is not the time for a discussion of total depravity and of the necessity for regeneration. There should be no demand for a vivid experience or a dramatic conversion. It is true that the child is depraved, and that he cannot be educated into the kingdom. He must be born into the kingdom, but a natural, normal birth under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is not necessarily violent. Indeed, it is most likely to be quiet and healthy and to come "without observation." The real joy of being a child in the family depends altogether upon the vividness and strength of

the present filial spirit, and not at all upon the painfulness of the birth. We must not expect children to have such a conviction and repentance as comes to old and hardened sinners. The young need to know not themselves, but Christ. He should be presented to them in that attractive and lovely personality which pervades the four Gospels. If Christ is kept before them, and they are taught to love him and follow him and work for him, the Holy Spirit will gently and naturally work within their hearts the miracle of eternal life.

But the time of youth is not the only time of awakening. At many other times in life the influence of the church and of individuals, the bearing of the man himself, and the enlightenment by the Holy Spirit lead to an interested awakened condition which is to be followed by that great upheaval in the spiritual life, the conviction of sin as a thing against the holy God.

CHAPTER VI

CONVICTION OF SIN

THE aim of Christian experience and training is to bring the man into personal relation with the holy and absolute God. This "personal relation" is an attitude of filial trust and love and obedience in which the whole man recognizes and accepts God as his Father and is conscious of sonship and heirship and fellowship in God's holy family. Since the perfection of manhood lies thus in a personal relation toward God, the man must be brought to a realization of the fact that his whole life and conduct, his thoughts, feelings, and actions, in their final account are to be judged by their relation to the holy God rather than by their relation to society, to civil law, to self-respect, or even to the standard set up by the moral ideal. Even conscience must at last ren-

der an account to God. The deep purpose of the conscience is to teach man that God has rights in him and demands obedience, and that he will sometime call for a settlement. The true work of conscience is much deeper than to get the man to do right. The demand is that the man do right, not primarily for right's sake, but as an expression of his willing obedience toward God. *The deepest purpose of life is not conduct, but harmony with the holy God.* This profound sense of responsibility to God, and the consciousness that the life and conduct, the whole mind and heart and will, are not in the proper relation to him, is what we mean by the conviction of sin. Conviction of sin therefore implies (1) a vision of God, and includes (2) a sense of sin as a thing opposed to God, and (3) a feeling of self-blame for the lack of harmony with God.

1. The conviction of sin implies a vision of God. The aim of the enlighten-

ment was to bring to the man a true conception of God and to train his faculties so that he could understand the vision when it came. The conception of God is the very foundation of the whole spiritual structure. The man who builded his house upon a rock builded it upon a great revelation of God. It matters not how bad a man may be, he can be lifted out of the very mouth of the pit if he can get a vision of God. We cannot do anything for him until he does get it. The spirit of our times is against any great vision of God. The Old Testament idea of God is out of our feeling, and our vision of Christ stops with his person and virtues and does not reach the atonement. We cannot even get a clear vision of the crucifixion. The power of the Gospel is neither in its severity nor in its mercy, but in the two combined. The thought of God's holiness drives the sinner into deeper despair. Some very eminent religious teachers seem to be in great fear

that some one will get hold of the old-fashioned idea that God has absolute rights in man, and that God's authority and God's word are supreme and inexorable. It will be a sad day for the Christian Church if it should lose all the sternness and strenuousness of the Old Testament out of its life and theology. It will have to travel a long way back before it can meet the Lord Jesus at Calvary and receive the Gospel message from his lips.

The conception or vision of God may be very weak and still be strong enough to make the man feel his lack of harmony with God. Some kind of a revelation of God must precede every true conversion.

2. The first element of conviction is a perception of what sin is. The man sees that he is in rebellion against God. He feels that he is wrong, not because he has violated his conscience or broken with the commonly accepted standard of right, but because he has offended God. He is in a desperate condition because there is a God

and because God has rights in him. God has made man, and given him a free moral nature, and must govern him in accord with that nature, but God has rights in a man just as he has in a worm. When a man realizes that God has rights in him, and demands obedience and will punish disobedience, he is in deep despair, and no one but God can help him out. He holds himself responsible to God for his sins against his fellow-men. He may have to make restitution, but the restitution does not settle the matter, since the real sin is against God and restitution to the fellow-man still leaves God to be settled with. The restitution may be the means of bringing on the conviction of sin. When a man comes to himself, and gets at the real center of his own soul, he sees that the real responsibility for every act is to God and the final settlement must be made with him. This is the profound element in conviction.

3. The second element of conviction is

self-blame. The man realizes his personal responsibility and blames himself, and himself only, for his sin. He sees that the sin is not the result of heredity, or environment, or temperament, or the influence of friends or enemies. It is the rebellion of his own will against God. There is small hope of any real change or reform in the life so long as the man tries to put the blame on some one else. There is great hope the moment the man frees himself from his surroundings and holds himself responsible. The vision of God, the sense of sin, and the feeling of self-blame all serve to put the man in a very wretched condition. God alone can help him, and God will do it if he can get any opportunity to do so.

In this state of conviction and unrest the person is hard to deal with. In the awakened state everything seemed to be progressing finely. Now perhaps the man stays away from church. His heart is hard and unyielding. He sees his re-

bellion but will not submit. The moment his heart begins to soften he begins to pass into the next stage, repentance. Of course, the whole procession of conditions preceding and during conversion may, and often does, take place in a few moments, or it may spread over several days, or even weeks and months. In any case the conditions and order of events here described are present and could be distinguished if all the facts were known.

The conviction of sin is a work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit chooses the time when he will bring the soul to a realization of its opposition to God and then forces a decision. In choosing this time for conviction the Holy Spirit takes into account the conditions previously mentioned as preparations for conversion. The church and the individual have power to bring a man to conviction only as they have present with them the power of the Holy Spirit. When the church meets the conditions of true worship, as

previously stated, then there is present in the church such power over the hearts and consciences of men that they are brought face to face with God and are convicted of sin. The Holy Spirit is always pleased to use the church and its members as a means of convincing the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment whenever, by obedience to the conditions of such usefulness, they will allow him to do so. A man can also bring the conviction upon himself. By his own actions and his attitude toward the truth he gives the Holy Spirit opportunity to lead him to God. A man may hasten the conviction by earnestly striving to do right. Every right action brings a man closer to God. Remembering what has been said about the vision of God as a basis for conviction, let us listen for a moment to Joseph Cook: "It is a fact of human nature that the total submission of the will to conscience brings into the soul immediately a sense of the divine approval and pres-

ence as personal. You turn upon the sky your unarranged telescope at random and you see nothing. Direct it properly, but fail to arrange the lenses, and everything visible through the tube is blurred. But arrange the lenses and bring the telescope exactly upon the star or upon the rising sun, and the instant there is perfect accord between the line of the axis of the tube and the line of the ray from the star or the orb of day, that instant, but never before, the image of the star or sun starts up in the chamber of the instrument. Just so I claim it to be the fact of experience that whenever we submit utterly, affectionately, irreversibly to the best we know—that is, to the innermost holiest of conscience—at that instant, and never before, there flashes through us, with quick, splendid, unexpected illumination, a Power not ourselves. You cannot have that inner witness until you have that exterior and interior conformity to conscience, but whoever has these will know

by the inner light that God is with him in a sense utterly unknown before. An utterly holy choice brings with it a Presence we dare not name. So much in conscience is known to be fixed natural law." (*Boston Monday Lectures*, "Conscience," p. 139.) When by a holy choice man brings into his heart the presence of God, that presence demands a new choice with regard to itself. Hence, even though a man be perfectly true to conscience, yet when that conformity to conscience brings a vision of God the man will feel a loss that cannot be met until he makes a new choice, accepting God, and choosing right thereafter as an expression of harmony with him. God is greater than conscience. The best that conscience can do is to expand the ideal until we come face to face with the holy God. When by a change of attitude he is chosen he still uses conscience to guide our steps and bring us nearer to himself. It is very probable that Paul came to conviction

through the activity of conscience. He started to keep the moral law, and kept it so well that he soon realized that righteousness was not in conformity to a moral standard but was a disposition of the heart and will, so he had to call upon Christ to deliver him from the body of this death. Some men, when they come to a realization of the fact that they cannot be good without God's help, refuse to make the surrender and, giving up all attempts to secure "righteousness in the inward parts," they fall back upon a mere outward conformity to an external standard. They are moral backsliders, and while they may be very respectable citizens they have not that righteousness which pertains to the kingdom of God. Such persons present the very hardest problem with which the church has to deal.

But the Holy Spirit is not dependent upon the church or the individual. Very often he forces the conviction of sin upon

a person without any apparent relation to the situation. Suddenly the man is brought to a conviction of his rebellion against the holy God and is in deep despair on account of his sins. The fervent prayer of a friend may influence the Spirit to bring conviction on a sinner. Every person in the world who comes to the age of responsibility is brought by the Holy Spirit to a sense of his need of an harmonious personal relation with God.

The conviction of sin which has just been described is that of a full-grown and responsible person who has continued in rebellion against God. The conviction that comes in childhood or in early youth has the same elements, but they are not so pronounced. But even in children the sense of sin as against God and the personal responsibility may be very vivid. Primarily the conviction of sin is the realization that the present life is not in proper relation and attitude toward God.

The situation can be very nicely illustrated by the social relation. The child sometime in his development finds that as an individual he is not in the proper relation to society. At first the self occupies the whole attention, but with the development of soul and body the youth finds himself in a new world and he must adapt himself to the new conditions. He sees that the perfect life, the life of freedom and content, is not that of an isolated individual, but that of a member of society. He will fall in love, and marry and have a home of his own. He will probably make some amusing blunders and perhaps some troublesome mistakes in his efforts to adapt himself to the situation, but he is going in the right direction. This feeling of individual restlessness, this desire for companions and family, may very properly be called the social conviction. If the youth surrenders himself in loving obedience to the laws of social development, if he sacrifices self for society, he becomes

naturally a happy member of the social organization. Without any great break with himself or with his former life he becomes a member of the great brotherhood of man; he is socially righteous and has a proper relation to his surroundings. But if he sets up his own selfish will against the demand of the brotherhood, and refuses to adjust himself to the social situation, he becomes an outcast and a criminal. He makes himself a social sinner and is socially lost. By and by another conviction of his inharmonious state will come to him, and very likely it will be a violent conviction. It ought to be violent. So with the religious conviction. In childhood or youth, as the powers develop and the soul awakens, there comes a profound consciousness that the soul is not at rest, and that it must adapt itself to God and his demands. This was discussed more fully in the last chapter. Now, if the situation is accepted, and an earnest, serious attempt is made to come into the proper

relation to God, the child will come naturally and easily into a state of conscious acceptance with God, and a life of trust and obedience will follow. The child needs religious training and religious activity. The Holy Spirit will attend to the regeneration and the depravity and all the rest. It is folly to expect the same violent feelings in a child that we have a right to expect in a hardened sinner. The savages and the heathen have recognized the religious awakening and the religious nature of the young, and have sometimes met the situation with better religious training and care than has the Christian Church. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" is profound wisdom for all ages.

The period of conviction is a time of hardened heart. The fight is on, and so long as it lasts the soul will not give in, will not surrender to God, will not submit at the point of rebellion. If the soul continues rebellious the conviction weakens

and finally disappears. A willful sin may cause it to leave all at once. Between the conviction and the repentance is the gracious invitation, to which we next give attention.

CHAPTER VII

THE INVITATION

GOD meets the despair and self-blame of conviction with an offer of pardon and a gracious invitation to accept Christ and become a member of God's family. When it is remembered that conviction implies a vision of the great and holy God, and a realization that sin is a personal affront to him, it will be easily seen that the sinner's case is entirely hopeless unless God comes to him with an offer of pardon. In such a situation a great revolution is produced in the sinner's condition when he realizes that God has come. The case is no longer hopeless, for, since God is gracious, if the sinner will do his part a complete restoration is possible. The great fundamental law of reconciliation is that the innocent party must make the first sacrifice and first move toward a set-

tlement. The case is hopeless, so far as any real reconciliation is concerned, until the offended one makes known in some way his willingness to forgive and provides opportunity for a restoration to peace and fellowship. The returning prodigal would not have fallen on his father's neck and poured out his soul in a plea for forgiveness and love if his father had met him with a cold, unbending dignity and formally assigned him to a place in the household. The father must run to meet him and pour out his heart before the returning son could have a right spirit renewed within him and have the joy of his sonship restored. The father must be a father before the son can be a son. In the life and death of his only begotten Son God has made the sacrifice and has come to meet the sinner with an offer of pardon and restoration. In this particular the atonement is a moral influence; but this provision for reconciliation is not the whole of the atonement, nor does it touch

the profoundest depth of the human obstacle to forgiveness.

This realization that God is gracious and will forgive enlarges the sinner's conception of God and thus increases the self-blame. The conception of God's holiness and righteousness and justice produces a powerful sense of despair and ill desert from which there is no escape. When the conception is enlarged to a vision of God's love as expressed in Christ the sinner feels that God is inviting him to return and hope arises. He had felt that God could never forgive him, but now that God has come with such tenderness and mercy the sinner is profoundly stirred. The knowledge of God's love increases the sorrow and self-blame, but his grief has become hopeful even as it grew more bitter. The man knows that it will come out right if he will do his part. Thus the Holy Spirit lovingly helps the man on.

The awakened and growing religious interest of the child or youth is met with

the same tender invitation to come to God and grow up into a life of conscious acceptance with him. In presenting the invitation the Holy Spirit generally uses human means and occasions, but the sinner cannot feel the force of the words of the invitation until the Holy Spirit so interprets them to him that he really grasps the idea that God is calling him.

With the invitation and offer of pardon the preparation is complete. God has brought the person squarely up to the place of rescue and thoroughly prepared him for the decision. Man has not stumbled upon the place by accident or in ignorance. God has done all he can do and not destroy the man's freedom. God cannot do any more for him in another life or another probation. God has emptied himself, has done his best work. He cannot do so well in another probation, even if he decided to give one. God has brought to bear upon him the influence of individuals, of the church, and of his own

conscience. The Holy Spirit has enlightened him and given him an interest in personal salvation. God has revealed his own nature and holiness to him, has shown him the nature of his sin and its consequences, and brought him to see that he is personally responsible for the sad condition. There is nothing in the situation for which he does not blame himself. He sees that he is not held accountable for ignorance, or depravity, but only for his own willful disobedience. God invites him to come and find rest and peace, invites him with all the force of the divine love as exhibited on the cross. The great stream of rescue is flowing at his feet. Will he plunge in and be made whole? The man must decide. He can harden his heart, and turn away, or he can open his heart to receive all that God has for him. The instant that the heart begins to soften and melt the conversion is begun. Man meets God's invitation by a repentance that will speedily pass into faith.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOUR OF DECISION

WE have carefully traced the history of the man as he is prepared for the rescue from sin, and noticed the states and feelings through which he has passed. In the work of preparation the man has been largely passive. The decisions of his own will have had some influence in the preparation, but the great work has been wrought by powers and influences outside of the man himself. But now we have come to the place where the man must decide. God cannot carry him any farther in the way of rescue unless the man definitely decides to travel that road. Before passing to the next step in the plan of rescue it will be profitable to discuss briefly the conditions which surround a man in the hour of decision. In that hour the man is perfectly free to choose any

one of the motives that appeal to him. The man holds himself responsible for his choice, the Bible holds him responsible and society holds him responsible, so he must be free to choose as he will.

No man ever went down to eternal death on general principles. Man's destiny is not decided by a comparison of the good and the bad in his life. God does not say of a man, as we so often say, "On the whole, there was more good than evil in his life." The man is lost because at a certain definite time in his life he committed certain definite acts of sin which he knew to be sin, and which he could have avoided if he had wanted to keep from doing them. The man himself knew that he was doing the forbidden thing and he did it on purpose. He does not blame anyone but himself, nor put the responsibility in any way upon anyone else. With his eyes wide open and his faculties alert he said, "This is the thing I choose; this is the thing I will be." Character may be

of slow growth. It may be determined, to some extent at least, by circumstances. But the crises that fix the soul's destiny are determined alone by the man and his God. At the moment when the choice must be made there is nothing in all the universe, so far as that man is concerned, except himself and God. He must obey or disobey. He stands in the presence of two or more possible choices. The holy God approves one of them and disapproves the rest, and the man knows it. Nothing can by any possible means influence the decision except the man himself. Heredity, depravity, environment, education, habit, former choices, character, not one of these can have the least influence in the matter until after the choice is made. They may determine the form of the crises; they can do nothing more. For the time the man separates himself from all external things, from all his possessions and accumulations and acquirements. None of the things that

appeal to the man and tempt him are a part of his real personality, and they cannot have any power over him until he accepts them and identifies himself with them. Thus it is that every man, regardless of conditions and circumstances, has the same chance, and every man has a fair chance, and every man has the best chance. He has the only chance there is. That is a chance to stand, not between the evil and the good, but between the evil and God, and choose one or the other. The habits, the inherited appetites, the fostered passions, the total suction of the awful whirlpool of sin, may hold him with a power that he cannot of himself resist, but when the great test comes he can rid himself of the whole wicked crowd by throwing himself into the arms of the loving God and crying, "O God, I choose thee; help me or I perish!" If the man chooses God and stands by his choice God is responsible for his being good. When the man chooses God, God sends

into his soul such an infusion of his own life and power as will renew and transform it and give him power over every form of sin. The man identifies himself with God. God identifies himself with that man. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If the man chooses the sin he does more than reject God. He identifies himself with the evil and puts himself in line with his depraved nature and gives himself willingly to the whole crowd of evil forces that drag him down to eternal death. He rejects God and chooses them. He is just as responsible for what they do with him as if he had made them all himself.

After the choice is made the previous

choices and education and environment become factors of the situation. The kind of man he was previous to the choice will influence his equipment for future work. Take, for example, two young men of equal age. One of them has been brought up in a Christian home with Christian training; he has habits of prayer and Bible reading and church attendance; he is acquainted with Christian people and is familiar with Christian work. The other young man is a child of the slums, with habits of stealing and swearing and drinking and lewdness; he knows nothing of Christian thought and work. The training of the first young man will not make it easier for him to choose God; the training of the second will not make it harder. In that respect neither has the advantage; they are equal. But if the first young man accepts God, see what an equipment he has for Christian work. He is well prepared to enter into immediate and useful Christian service. If he ac-

cepts the sin he will have to fight all his decent habits. If the second young man accepts God all his former life and habits must be overcome, and until they are overcome he cannot do much Christian work. If he decides with the sin he finds himself well prepared to enter into all forms of sin and wickedness. But in the hour of decision neither has the advantage. A man is lost because on a certain definite occasion he rejected God and decided to do a certain definite sinful thing. There will be no vagueness about it. The man and all his friends will understand it. No one will wonder why he is in such a sad plight. No one will complain of the harshness of divine justice.

In a Christian land every man must be brought squarely up to the place where he must accept or refuse the divine rescue provided by the Lord Jesus Christ, and no man is lost until he completely and finally rejects God and the rescue. It is true that a man is not saved until he has accepted

Christ. It is equally true that a man is not lost until he rejects Christ. His destiny is an open question until he decides it. For men in heathen lands and for all men who do not come under the influence of the Gospel the spirit of the test is exactly the same, although it differs greatly in form. There is a real test, and every man has a chance to decide what he will be. God will take care of all the rest when once the decision is finally made.

In bringing this crisis upon a man God selects a time when the man is best prepared to accept him. God knows how many tests are necessary to thoroughly try the man, and he prepares the man for these tests and does all he can to make it easy for him to accept God and hard for him to accept sin. God brings to bear upon the man all the pressure he can stand and remain free. *No man will be lost if anything can save him.*

In our study of personal salvation we have come to the hour of decision. The

man has been brought face to face with God and face to face with his sin. God stands with outstretched arms and loving voice inviting the man to accept him. The man must decide. He must do something with God's invitation. In repentance the man prepares himself for the great decision which completes the act of faith and unites the man with God. Repentance is really the beginning of that decision. We cannot make too emphatic the fact that the decision is not alone a choice of right. It is a choice of the personal God, and of right as an expression of harmony with him.

CHAPTER IX

REPENTANCE

IN conversion, as in the preparation, there is a human and a divine element. God and man work together to secure the rescue from sin. When God has revealed himself to the sinner, and has convinced him of sin and has invited him to forsake his sin and to come back to God, God has done all that he can do until the man does something. The human elements of conversion are repentance and faith. The divine elements are justification, regeneration, and adoption into God's family. This outline of conversion is valuable for clearness and as an aid to Bible study. While every conversion may not conform to the plan in every respect, the lack of the conformity lies in the lack of definiteness in the conversion rather than in the rigidity of the outline. In each conver-

sion there are personal elements which give emphasis to some particular phase of experience. But even with these personal elements present the central facts of the rescue are the same. The outline is not mechanical or factitious. It is not a superimposed theory, but an analysis of the facts which really occur in every rescue from sin. As the time required for the completion of conversion depends upon the man and his surroundings, it naturally results that some conversions are hard to analyze and the man himself may not know just where he stands. The important thing for a man to know is whether or not at this present moment he loves God, and hates sin, and finds joy in God's house and among God's people.

Conviction is the self-blame which results from a realization of what God is and what his rights are in us.

This self-blame is tenderly met by the Holy Spirit in invitation.

Conviction and invitation form the

basis for repentance, which is a personal sorrow for sin as a thing against God. Closely analyzed, repentance has two features: (1) Contrition, a broken heart; and (2) aversion to sin, a hatred of all sin as ungodly.

1. The first movement in repentance is contrition, or the softening of the hard, stubborn, rebellious heart. God's love and tenderness expressed in the invitation softens the hard heart and puts the man in a state where God can do more for him. Behind this softening of the heart there is an act of the will. The man must submit to God. Even though the ability to repent be a gift of the Holy Spirit the man is still responsible. If God gives the man ability to repent he must use that ability. Whatever is necessary for God to do he does. Man has the power to submit to God and soften his heart. It matters not how he got the power. The question is, Will he use it? The way to submit is to submit. God cannot do any-

thing for the man until the man softens his heart, is in a teachable and humble state, and will allow the Spirit to lead him into a complete committal of himself to God. The change of attitude in a penitent is exactly identical with a change that can readily be observed in a rebellious child. At first the child is stubborn and willful, and refuses to submit, but if he is carefully dealt with he will soon give up, and the broken-hearted, contrite state which follows presents to the parents a splendid opportunity to secure loving obedience and to bind the child more closely to themselves. Repentance begins with a broken and a contrite heart in which there is a deep sorrow for sin as rebellion against God.

2. In addition to the personal sorrow for sin there is also aversion toward the personal sins and toward all sin in general. The man begins to loathe that which he once loved. This change of feeling toward sin is not simply aversion

to sin because of its inherent meanness and vileness and ugliness, but a loathing of sin because it is a personal affront to God. The meanest thing about sin is its ungodliness. This aversion toward sin is a fundamental part of all true repentance. The man who has the right spirit never boasts of his past sins. He does not like to talk about them. The remembrance of them is grievous unto him. He loathes and hates his whole sinful life. He is sad whenever he thinks of it. There is something very shallow about the man who boasts that when he was a sinner he was a very great sinner indeed. The repentance which is a "godly sorrow, working repentance unto salvation," carries with it a keen aversion to sin, and a feeling of great sadness whenever the former sins come to mind.

The Christian never loses the repentant spirit. The contrite heart and the aversion are always with him. His growth in grace and his acquirement of holiness are

dependent upon a continued attitude of personal sorrow on account of sin. Repentance is the foundation of all our intercourse with God.

In true repentance the sin is considered simply in its relation to God. Hence the necessity for a vision of God and a conviction of sin as a preparation for repentance. The man is not ready to decide until he has these. Without them he cannot do anything with himself in the way of rescue from sin. Without the true repentance God cannot do anything with him. God's aim is not simply to make men comfortable. It is much deeper than that. God is trying to get men to be right, even though for a while he must make them uncomfortable. Unless great care is taken we are very likely to get a false situation and a false repentance. A man may be all broken up for fear he will be found out, or he may dread the effects of his sin. In many ways he may get a false situation. Repentance is not fear of

detection or of punishment; it is not wounded self-love nor stricken pride; it is not vexation and annoyance with ourselves that we have been so weak; it is not chagrin nor mortification, not self-reproach nor a hurt to our self-respect; it is not a fit of low spirits and self-resentment because we have done wrong; it is not the condemnation of conscience. All of these may make a man very uncomfortable, but they are not repentance. The penitent forgets all these, forgets himself, forgets his liability to punishment, and considers only that he has offended God. It was not until the Lord turned and looked upon Peter that Peter went out and wept bitterly. "It is God looking into the sinner's face that has introduced a Christian element into the human sorrow for sin. And Paul, in making the Christian vocabulary, had to coin a word which was strange to all the philosophies of the world then, and is so still, when he joined the conceptions of God and sorrow into

one and told us of the godly sorrow which had the marvelous virtue of working a repentance not to be repented of. And it is this new and sacred sorrow which comes to sinful men as often as the Lord turns and looks upon their life; it is this which adds the penitential incense of true penitence to the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart. That was a great distinction which Luke brings out in the prodigal's life between coming to himself and coming to his father. So we are always coming to ourselves. We are always finding out, like the prodigal, what miserable bargains we have made. But it is only when we come to our Father that we can get them undone and the real debt discharged" (Henry Drummond, *The Ideal Life*).

Sometimes a disturbed sinner is petted and brought into the church without any real Christian experience. This is a great mistake. It is not our place to comfort a man in sin. We can point him to Christ,

and try to get him to see God and hear the tender voice. It may be that the glimpse of God will plunge him a hundredfold deeper in distress. If so, we have done the best thing for him. While repentance is a deep sorrow it is also hopeful. The stricken soul begins to see a way out, the light begins to shine in the darkness. All through the stage of repentance the enlightenment and conviction and invitation of the Holy Spirit are going on. While the man is repenting the Spirit is preparing him for the next step, which is the real crisis in the rescue. As the sorrow deepens the Saviour appears with a thousand forms of beauty, full of love and mercy. Each look at the Saviour may plunge the man in deeper distress, but each deeper plunge brings with it a greater hope. There is a way out. A little faith and he is on solid ground again clasped in the Saviour's arms.

The penitent sits in a station but takes

no train. He loathes his present situation and has made up his mind to go somewhere. Faith will soon pick up the whole man and carry him out and unite him to God.

CHAPTER X

FAITH

THE crisis of the experience of rescue from sin is the act of faith by which the sinful man accepts the Lord Jesus Christ, personally appropriates Christ's work in atonement, and joins himself to Christ in a declaration of loyalty and allegiance. In the hour of decision the man is put in a situation where he must reject or accept God. In the act of faith the man takes up his total self and carries it over and gives it to God. Since faith is the means by which the rescue from sin is personally appropriated, and also the condition of continued harmony with God and of all growth and progress in the Christian life, there is need for clear and careful treatment. How often a repentant sinner is advised thus: "Believe that Christ is

able to save you and you are saved;" or, "Just believe you are saved and you are saved." If the sinner did not believe that Christ was able to save him, and had died to save him, he would not be there seeking salvation. A man is always, by the very nature of the case, a believer before he is a seeker. Neither can a man believe he is saved until he is saved. He is not saved until he accepts Christ by faith, and when he has done that he will know it, for it is something he has done himself. It is a decision, a choice, of his own will. The sinner goes to the altar not to receive something, but to do something; that is, to surrender and totally abandon himself to God. When he has done this he will receive pardon and forgiveness.

Religious faith is a great moral grapple with a moral ideal, in which the man commits himself in loving self-surrender and trust to that ideal and makes his whole life conform to its demands. The character of the faith is determined by the char-

acter of the moral ideal. The higher the ideal the more perfect and definite the faith and the resultant life. In order to secure a clear understanding of faith each phase of religious faith will be briefly discussed, with definitions and other quotations from the notes of Dr. Curtis's lectures. The Christian Church has within its membership and among its adherents a large number whose faith, while it is truly religious, is not actually Christian, even though largely colored by Christian teaching. For this reason we are giving these phases of faith as clear a treatment as possible.

I. RELIGIOUS FAITH

“On the merely religious plane faith is a bearing of trust, by which a man expresses his belief in some moral ideal, his duty toward that ideal, his regard for that ideal, and a venture of the will in the name of that ideal.”

On the very lowest plane faith is an act

of the total man. It is the most wholesome thing a man ever does. Repentance is the bridge that separates morality from religion. Faith is the actual occupancy of the land on the side of the river to which repentance leads. In the discussion of the preparation for conversion we found that if a man was entirely true to his ideal his very faithfulness would cause a state of unrest and despair, because his moral ideal expanded faster than his ability to live up to it. This peculiar sorrow is a "glimmer of that righteous sorrow which in Christian doctrine is called repentance." Now, if, in spite of his despair, the man holds himself true to his moral ideal "the initial bearing of repentance is followed by a bearing of confidence that his intention, his love of the right for its own sake, is the main thing, after all, and must, somewhere, somehow, be the final test of destiny. This confidence is not a result of the mechanical or natural process of the moral life, but is a creation of

the Holy Spirit as he meets with grace the man's despair. Just as we had an initial or pretypical repentance, so now we find a pretypical faith. This faith substitutes a personal attitude toward righteousness for the perfect moral life, which was found to be impossible. The man dares to believe that what he means is of more ultimate worth than what he can accomplish now under his ideal. This substitution of spirit for letter does not weaken his regard for the moral law, but strengthens it. Never before did he so intensely try to live a perfect life. The secret of this effort, continued and increased, is a new love for his moral ideal, and a new hope that none of his struggle can be wasted."

Thus faith is the center of all religion, even the lowest. This faith which is defined as "merely religious" is the faith of the pantheist, and of those who do not know a personal God, but who do believe in some power higher than themselves,

which makes for righteousness. A man can have such an ideal and such a religious faith anywhere in the world, regardless of his environment. In a Christian land a man with such a faith may practice some Christian virtues, but they form no part of his religion and are not related to his religious ideal. Such a faith may be very earnest and work great sacrifices; it may have a settled purpose of righteousness and be very strenuous and noble, but it has no peace and joy, no pardon, no knowledge of God, no comfort in sorrow, no loving and sympathetic Saviour. No man in a Christian land ought to be satisfied with such a faith. Let us leave such a faith to the heathen, and, seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, a High Priest that is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

II. FAITH IN A PERSONAL GOD

“On the theistic plane faith has the same elements of belief, duty, regard, and venture, but the moral ideal is either the personal God, or the moral law as an expression of the nature of the personal God.”

This is a much higher faith than the faith defined as merely religious. The fact that the moral ideal is identified with the personal God gives it a majesty and grandeur and thrill of enthusiasm utterly unknown to the faith on the lower plane. The conception of the personal God wonderfully increases the elements of love and duty, and adds to the self-surrender and sacrifice an intense and profound personal satisfaction. But even with the profound note this faith is all but despair. It has no joyfulness, no shout of victory. There is no way for man to reach the God and no way for God to come down to help the man; “neither is there any daysman

betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." Job, Socrates, and Carlyle are good examples of faith on this plane.

III. OLD TESTAMENT FAITH

"On the Old Testament plane the ideal is essentially the same, that is, a personal God, and the moral law as an expression of the personal God, but the ideal is so colored by the Messianic prophecies as greatly to increase the element of regard."

The Old Testament fathers had for their ideal a personal God and the moral law, but they had something more. The great thought in the Old Testament is the coming Messiah. God is coming to help. The hope of a coming Messiah gave a peculiar definiteness to their faith and made it great. The idea of Immanuel made the Hebrew prophet and poet a man of deep and intense joy. It was this idea that God was coming to help his people that lay at the foundation of the Old Testa-

ment priesthood and the day of atonement.

The dominant note in Christian faith is this: God has come to help us. He is with us now. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." Christian faith will be defined and discussed at length in the next chapter.

We cannot emphasize too greatly the idea that faith is an expression of the whole man in self-sacrifice and toil for a moral ideal. Longfellow's well-known poem "Excelsior" is an almost perfect delineation of the strenuousness of religious faith. It has the conception of a high ideal, the duty of attaining it, love as a great motive power, and the action of the will to meet the ideal. The word "excelsior" is a part of a Latin phrase meaning "My goal is higher," and is here used as an expression of

“incessant aspiration after something higher :”

“The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, ’mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
‘Excelsior!’

“His brow was sad; his eye beneath
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
‘Excelsior!’”

Because the multitude were satisfied with their present attainment his aspiration and sacrifice spoke to them in a “strange” and “unknown tongue.” He felt keenly the temptation to stay his course and enjoy the blessing near at hand, but his goal was higher :

“In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
‘Excelsior!’

“‘O stay,’ the maiden said, ‘and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!’
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
‘Excelsior!’”

In the hour of testing there were none to help him, none to encourage, none to give him a hand of fellowship. The "old man" and the "peasant" warned him of the dangers of the way, but boldly he presses on to attain a goal they have long ago given up:

" 'Try not the Pass!' the old man said;
'Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!'
And loud that clarion voice replied,
'Excelsior!'

" 'Beware the pine tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!'
This was the peasant's last Good night.
A voice replied, far up the height,
'Excelsior!'

Dangers and difficulties only spur on the man of faith. His goal is higher. He

"laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, 'It shall be done!'

The long night, with its cold and storms and dangers, passed:

"At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
'Excelsior!'

On until late in the day the great struggle continued. But at last

“A traveler, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice
That banner with the strange device.
‘Excelsior!’ ”

They only found his body. His spirit had gone on. He had been faithful to his ideal. He had suffered for it. He made sacrifices for it. He died for it. *But he found it.* He had gone up higher. The impetus of his faith carried him across to a “sky serene and far.”

“There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
‘Excelsior!’ ”

But this faith, grand and heroic as it was, is correctly described as “merely religious.” The youth did not have any definite idea as to what he would find at the top of the mountain. He only knew that there was something higher than himself and that he would find it.

If the youth had seen a light at the top, shining through the window of a dwelling, assuring him that a Person waited to greet him when he came to the top, his faith would have been theistic. Still he would not have been conscious of help, even though invisible hands were smoothing his way and lessening his dangers.

If he had seen a Man coming down from the house with a lantern, to find and assist him, he would have had the Old Testament faith, with its vision of a coming Messiah. This would have given a greater element of hope and assurance and love to the situation.

Christian faith means that Christ has come. God is with us in the power of his mighty personality, standing by our side, his arm linked in ours, filling our hearts with courage and victory and fellowship, and inspiring new life into our lagging footsteps with stories of our Father's house and the welcome awaiting us in its many mansions. As the Christian jour-

neys he may keenly realize that "still afar the mountains are," yet he trustingly sings, with John Henry Newman:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
 Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
 Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

"So long thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
 Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!"

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIAN FAITH

“ON the Christian plane, faith, while it culminates in a definite act, is a personal bearing of the entire man, expressing his belief in Christ as God, his consequent duty toward Christ, his love for Christ, and a venture out upon Christ as his personal Saviour.”

The value of the act of faith will not be hard to understand if we keep in mind the condition of the man who is exercising the faith. He has been convicted of sin as a thing against God, and he knows that the blame for his evil condition is all his own. In his despair God comes to him with a gracious offer of forgiveness and restoration. The man must choose between his sin and God. God makes a strong appeal to him. God's love and mercy have melted his heart. He hates

his sin. He especially hates it because he has now come to realize what God is to him, and love and duty toward God come rushing upon him as a flood. Christ is presented to him as an atoning Saviour, as an only Saviour. Christ comes as God, with the authority of God. When the man decides against his sin, and chooses God, the God he accepts is Christ. The act of the will which chooses Christ commits the whole self to Christ, and the human side of the rescue is completed. The man has put himself in God's hands. God will restore his soul.

The fundamental thing in this Christian faith is the belief in Christ as God. The man has sinned against God personally, and God cannot delegate the act of forgiveness to another. The man demands, and rightly demands, that he be allowed to deal directly with God. Nothing else will do. The man cannot accept Christ, or allow Christ to have any relation to the matter, until he is convinced

that Christ is God. There can be no Christian faith until the deity of the Christ is settled. And, somehow, when the man comes fairly to the test he accepts Christ as God without any hesitancy. The enlightenment, the conviction, the repentance, have quickened and unified the whole man. His faculties are all alert, they all work together. The sinner is not a theologian, but he knows what he wants, and when he sees Christ he knows he has found it. There is something about the personality of Christ that convinces the honest, eager heart that he is divine. It is not his genius, not his mental ability, not his miracles, not his spiritual insight, not his love, not his self-sacrifice. But in some way his bearing expresses to us all the fullness of God, and, with the apostles, we behold his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The power of the sufferings and death of Christ lies in the fact that the suffering is

an expression of the self-sacrifice of God. The revival power of a church can almost be measured by the clearness of its belief in the deity of Christ. One great trouble with the Church is the utter flabbiness with which the fundamental Christian doctrines are held.

With the mental side of the man carried, the recognition of duty and the affections are soon carried. If Christ is only a man there is no duty. But the man is dealing with God, who appeals to his whole moral nature. The feelings of duty and love arise spontaneously as soon as Christ is recognized as God. There is now a great motive to action, a compound motive composed of love and duty. This great motive urges the man to accept Christ. It does not compel him, but it wields a very great pressure. When the will submits the whole man is carried, and the total personality is joined to Christ by a declaration of loyal trust and allegiance whose motive power is love and duty.

All through the experiences discussed so far the man has believed in himself, in his moral nature, in the demands of his ideal, in the reality of a higher, purer life. The man decides that the hunger of his moral nature is not a dream but a reality. So when Christ comes it is easy to believe in him. He has trusted himself, he can trust Christ; so he takes his all and commits it to Christ for time and eternity.

The relation between a lover and his bride is a clear illustration of faith. It begins with a mental attitude. There must be knowledge before there can be anything else. The woman presents certain marked characteristics and facts which are data for mental judgment. If the woman by her appearance, disposition, actions, etc., pleases the man his mental judgment approves her and a feeling of respect follows. By the dignity of his bearing and the greatness of his personality Christ secures the approval of the judgment so soon as the facts concerning

him are known. So far the two cases are parallel. The same faculties are concerned in each. The next step is love. Love cannot be forced. "The love which is the profoundest feeling of personal interest is a gift, pure and simple." The only thing that one can do to secure love is to put one's self in such a position that the gift of love may follow. The love when it comes furnishes motive power for further action. With the approval and the love the moral nature is interested, and duty arises to increase the strength of the motive and to become a part of it. The feeling of duty as a motive to marriage may not be very strong, but in relation to Christ the feeling of duty is very strong, since Christ is God and we feel the force of his demands upon us. Christ is also so supremely beautiful and lovable that he easily wins the heart and carries the moral nature with it. But, with the love and duty present, the attitude is not yet that of faith. The intellect has con-

ceived an end, and there is a strong compound motive, composed of duty and love, toward the action necessary to secure the end, but there is no faith until the will is carried and the total self is carried over and joined and entirely committed in trust to the care of another. A man may have the approval of judgment, and feel the love and duty very keenly, and still for some reason refuse to commit himself by marriage to the woman he loves. So a man may approve Christ as his God and, with a clear recognition of love and duty, still refuse the surrender of will by which he definitely commits himself to Christ.

When a man commits himself to Christ by faith he knows that he has done it just as surely as a man knows when he has made up his mind to marry his sweetheart. The man also knows that he is accepted of God, because God has promised forgiveness to all who come to him by faith. Faith secures a personal union with God which makes doubt impossible.

And here again we see the necessity of a definite belief in Christ as God. If a man in his extreme need grasped for a moment at the word of a man or of an angel, and found momentary relief in that, still the time would come when he would doubt. Also, as we shall see, faith secures a vital union between the believer and the object of his faith. If a man joins himself by faith to a man, it matters not how perfect that man may be nor how full of the spirit and blessing of God, the believer has not yet secured that personal relation with God which is the goal of all religious endeavor.

The act of faith is the climax of conversion. The rescue is instantly complete. The work that God must do he does instantly. The man may or may not be at the time conscious of the divine work in the rescue.

The act of faith may or may not be accompanied by emotional excitement. That depends upon the man and his disposi-

tion and surroundings. Until the faith is consummated it is a time for calm deliberation and great earnestness and seriousness. The seeker should never be bewildered or hindered by having his thoughts or attention directed to anything except Christ and the surrender to him. When the surrender is made and Christ is accepted there will be joy and peace as a result of the union with Christ. The divine plan is that the man shall come into the relation toward God of a loving and obedient child. By repentance and faith the man has surrendered himself in joyful allegiance to that plan. There is joy among the angels and in the church because a new brother has been born into the family of God.

CHAPTER XII

THE RIGHTEOUS QUALITY OF FAITH

THE rescue from sin which God has provided is not a legal, forensic, or formal redemption, concerning itself merely with external things. It is complete and perfect, and exactly meets the necessity of the situation both within and without. It lifts the man out of the wreck of sin and gets the sin out of the man. It gets the man into the kingdom of God and gets the kingdom of God into the man. At every stage the man acts of his own free will, and yet his rescue is all of God. God meets the man, wherever he is, and by a very simple process the whole man is gathered up and started on toward the goal. Without having any violence done to his nature the man is so completely separated from his sins that he is, in a very real sense, a new creature, yet his per-

sonal identity is not disturbed. The secret of the whole process lies in the quality and results of the act of faith by which the rescue is secured. Faith is not an arbitrary condition which takes the place of righteous conduct, but is of itself righteous conduct of the very highest order, and it is also a guarantee of righteous conduct in the future. It has a power of its own to secure a righteous result which is a true inward holiness. Thus, for the reason that faith has an ethical quality and an ethical result, it can be trusted to secure the beginning, continuance, and completion of the whole Christian life.

Faith, even on the lowest plane, has a true ethical quality. There are two elements in faith which give it this righteous quality: (1) The conscience is involved, and duty is a part of the motive leading to the decision of the will. This fact gives to the decision a moral quality and makes the act of faith righteous conduct. (2) In faith the total man is carried, and any-

thing which carries the total man has a righteous quality, since man is made in the image of God. In sin the man is fragmentary. His sin is never an expression of his total self. The image of God is held in abeyance, "held down in unrighteousness." But when a man expresses his whole self, as he does in faith, he expresses the image of God within him, and that makes such expression a righteous act. The act of faith is the beginning of holiness.

Faith has also in addition to its righteous quality an ethical or righteous result. The ideal which draws out the faith is a righteous ideal, and in following the ideal there is a righteous result. A man becomes like that which he thinks upon and loves and endeavors to secure. (1) Faith has an unselfish ideal. The center of the man's life is transferred from self to something outside of self. The life begins to reorganize about the unselfish ideal, and the beauty of the

ideal permeates the whole man. There can be no faith without an ideal entirely unselfish and outside the man himself. The cure of a disease can never be made an object of faith. There cannot be an unselfish motive of love and duty toward the securing of such an end. Because faith has for its object a righteous ideal entirely without the self it has a righteous result. (2) Faith, as Paul says, "works by love." This means that love is a part of the motive leading to the action. This element of love is particularly strong in Christian faith. To the Christian "God is love; benignant, self-communicating, self-sacrificing love. To believe in such a God is to make love—similar in spirit, if limited in capacity—the law of life. Not the love of gratitude alone, but the love of adoration for the highest conceivable ethical ideal realized in the divine nature" (A. B. Bruce). There is a very vigorous and profound spiritual law that the choice of a motive strengthens that

motive and weakens all opposing motives. Hence, when in faith the compound motive of love for and duty toward a righteous ideal is chosen, that motive is strengthened and all opposing motives are weakened. By the expression of faith, and by the continued attitude of faith, the motive of love and duty for the righteous ideal goes on from strength to strength until it gains entire control of the whole life and all opposing motives are killed. Thus the righteous character is fixed as a result of faith. (3) The third righteous result of faith is that the man in faith unites himself to his ideal and identifies himself with it. This vital union with Christ secured by faith has both a righteous quality and a righteous result.

Thus we see that faith is not an arbitrary condition, securing a merely formal or legal pardon. It is a powerful principle energized by an unselfish love, meriting, in a certain sense, the grace with which God meets it.

CHAPTER XIII

FAITH AND THE DIVINE SIDE OF CON-
VERSION

THE work of God in the actual rescue from sin is threefold. It is one work in the sense that it is all done at one time, and it is completely and perfectly done immediately following the act of faith. The sinner has repented of his sins and definitely accepted God. God immediately accepts the sinner, and a perfect reconciliation at once takes place. This reconciliation has three distinct phases which can be easily distinguished, even though they all occur at once. The sinner by his sin has made himself liable to punishment, and has also personally offended God. The reconciliation means that the offenses, in so far as they relate to the moral law, are pardoned, and that the man, in so far as he has grieved God, is forgiven.

The sinner by his sin has so dissipated and degraded his moral powers that impurity pervades his whole nature, and he has no settled purpose of righteousness and no power to live up to such a purpose if he had it. In the rescue from sin the man acquires a guiding principle of righteousness with power to follow its leadings. The Holy Spirit does such a work within the man that he has power to overcome all sin and lead a holy life. The sinner by his sin has separated himself from God's family, has gone into a far country, and is outside of God's plan for the human race. The reconciliation with God means that the man has returned to God and is adopted into God's family and has all the rights and privileges of the sons of God. God sends the spirit of his own Son into his heart, teaching him to say "Abba, Father," and witnessing to the new filial relation.

Each of these phases of personal salvation will be discussed in due time. The

purpose now is to show how each of these elements of the divine side of the rescue is related to the act of faith. By faith the man has joined himself to Christ in loyalty and holy allegiance. The profound element in the situation is this: God no longer deals with the man through the moral law, but he deals with him personally through Christ. Because the man is joined to Christ the past is all forgotten and blotted out, and God deals with the man from the new standpoint. And God also deals with the present as a prophecy of the future. God does not judge the man by each detail of his life, but by the union with Christ, which is a settled purpose of righteousness, guaranteeing perfect conduct in due time. The man is saved—that is, he has escaped punishment and is a personal friend of God—not because he is perfect, but because he is joined to Christ. If the man were dealing with the law the law would demand sanctification and glorification all at once.

But he is dealing personally with God in Christ, and God, having secured by the man's faith a loyal person, is well content to wait for the holy person and the perfect man, knowing that the first will secure the others as sure as the day follows the sunrise.

In a home in a western village was a son thirteen years of age. For a year he had been lying to his parents and to his teacher, had played truant, and acquired other vicious habits. The habit of lying had taken a specially strong hold on him. Finally the father became aware of the situation and sought some punishment that should lift up before the boy and the rest of the family the wickedness of such conduct. The father's attitude was one of stern righteousness. The boy would not show any sorrow for his sin, and finally, knowing that a punishment was coming, he ran away. The mother had been very feeble for some time, and the father had kept the most of the truth

from her, but at last, since the boy was gone, he had to tell her the whole truth. The mother quickly understood the situation, and would not allow the father to bend from his stern attitude. The real problem before them was not merely to get the boy home, but to get him to repent of his sin and become loyal to their authority. They needed something that would reach the very center of the situation and soften the boy's heart, rescue him from his sin, and restore him to true sonship in the family. The mother solved the difficulty. Sick and feeble as she was, she started out, on a dark and stormy night, to find the boy and bring him home. The father at home paced the floor and suffered tenfold more than the mother. After a long and weary search the mother found him asleep on some rubbish in an old mill. When she awakened him from his sleep he realized at once his mother's sacrifice for him and his sin against his parents, and he broke all to pieces. Re-

pentant and sorrowful, and yet with a new and profound love for his mother, he went home with her, supporting her as he could, for she was utterly exhausted. Together they tottered through the door at home, where the father waited with anxious heart to receive them. Mother and son, he gathered them to his arms in one strong embrace, *and that moment the boy was justified, forgiven.* A great and new thing had come into the boy's life which in a very real sense made him a new creature: this new thing was a new love for his parents, and especially his new attitude toward his mother and his new loyalty to her. This furnished a center for future operations, and the father's attitude of stern righteousness was buried in the new relation. The father could not weaken his demands or change his attitude so long as the boy was rebellious. But now that the boy is repentant, and is joined to his mother by a new and powerful tie, the father can safely

forgive the boy and deal with him from the new standpoint. And the father can do this with perfect safety, since the boy and the rest of the family get from the mother's self-sacrifice a keener sense of the wickedness of the sin than they could have gotten from any amount of direct punishment. The mother's motive was not merely love. It was a holy love which not only sought to bring back the boy but sought to bring him back a good boy. The mother's suffering expressed both the father's righteousness and the father's and mother's love. The boy clearly understands this, and for this reason the punishment can be remitted and the boy forgiven. And this new attitude toward his mother not only secures his present forgiveness; it secures a right course of conduct in the future. The lying habit may be so strong that the boy will sometimes lie unconsciously, but it is not the same kind of a lie as before. As soon as he thinks of his mother he will repent of the

lie. The father knows that as long as the boy is joined to his mother he is going on toward righteousness. Having secured a loyal boy, he can safely wait for the good boy. And the new situation is much more powerful than the old one in securing the good boy.

The boy's attitude toward his mother is precisely that of faith. When his mother came to him there was knowledge, love, and duty, and a decision of the will by which he definitely committed himself in loyal trust to his mother. He was rescued by faith, and the faith has a peculiar and vital relation to all his parents' attitudes toward him. Just so God in Christ goes after the sinner, melts his heart and offers him salvation. By faith the sinner joins himself to Christ in loving trust and loyalty, and God forgives him and uses this new factor in his life to secure future holiness. For this reason holiness is the second goal of personal salvation. By the very nature of the case, there cannot be a

holy person until there is a loyal person to be made a holy person.

So a man is not justified because he is perfect. He is justified because he is joined in the whole man to Christ. God judges a Christian man by his relation to Christ, and not by his relation to the moral law. But the moral law is in Christ, and the Christian's duty is greater than before because of his love for Christ. Thus a man is saved by faith and not by works. Paul used legal terms because they were clear-cut and carried definite ideas, but he has the great truth beneath. He is all the time thinking of the union with Christ and the ethical quality of that union. James would say that the boy was saved by going home with his mother. Paul goes much deeper and expresses the real truth, and would say that the boy was saved because of his new attitude toward his mother; that is, by faith.

SUMMARY

1. "When a man has faith in Christ as his personal Saviour this faith really joins the man to Christ in holy allegiance."

2. "Because faith results in the holy allegiance it is a fitting ethical substitute for the former demand of obedience to the moral law. That is, faith, while a condition of salvation, is not arbitrary, but is selected for the precise reason that it has an ethical content and brings about a powerful ethical result."

CHAPTER XIV

JUSTIFICATION

"JUSTIFICATION is a forensic term, meaning that a guilty man is forgiven, because Christ died to save him, on the condition of personal faith in Christ as Saviour. But, deeper yet, justification means that God has given up the old way of dealing with man, through the moral law, and now deals with him as a man joined to Christ in holy allegiance. God's bearing is changed, but the new bearing is fully as righteous as the old one."

In every chapter the fact has been emphasized that the goal of all religion is to bring the man into a closer personal relation with the holy God. This means that the man will be inwardly and outwardly holy and full of love in every part. But it means more than that; it means that

the man is God's friend and that there is personal communion and fellowship between them. Hence the great work in the rescue from sin is to get the man to cease his opposition to God and submit himself to God in loyal and loving obedience. This submission and trust bring the man into a proper relation with God, and there is perfect harmony and peace and fellowship between them. The justified state is exactly illustrated by the case of the boy mentioned in the last chapter. The goal of the family government is to secure loving and trustful loyalty from the children to the parents and to their plan for the home. In the case mentioned this was secured by the mother's sacrifice and the boy's loyalty to her. With the proper relation between parent and child any desired result can be obtained. If the boy has been disobedient this will secure obedience. If he has acquired evil habits this will secure his escape from them. Now the justified man stands in precisely

the same relation to God. He has submitted himself in loyal and loving trust. God can do with him what he will. The justified state is a state of peace with God, of fellowship with God, of obedience to God, of complete abandonment of everything displeasing to God, of freedom from willful sin, a state of sonship in God's family, and of rapid development of all the habits and personal virtues of the sons of God. Justification is the first goal and the greatest goal of personal salvation and personal religion. It is never superseded or overshadowed by any other state or blessing. To the end of the eternities God deals with the Christian through his motive of love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, by the new personal relation secured by faith. If, as a result of the personal relation with God, the motive of love and loyalty to Christ becomes absolutely dominant in the man's life, thus securing entire inward holiness, the justified state is not superseded nor

its glory dimmed, but it is thereby made secure. If in the life after death the personal fellowship with God should secure for the man an actual becoming of what he really means to be, thus extending the perfect holiness of intention to an actual holiness of conduct, the justified state is not thereby weakened or passed by, but is merely coming into possession of its own. If on the day of resurrection the whole man, soul and body, is glorified by the power of God and, conformed within and without to the image of God's only begotten Son, and comes into God's immediate and visible presence, he does not cease to live by faith, nor is his blessing of justification swallowed up in the bliss of heaven. For the first time in all his existence the man is freed from limitations and has opportunity to know the real height and depth and length and breadth of justification; that is, of personal friendship with God. The man who belittles the justified state needs to taste

again the bread of life that he may learn its flavor.

The conviction of sin had a double element; a realization of the guilt of sin and of the fact of God's personal displeasure. When the sinner repents of his sin, and accepts Christ by faith, he escapes the just punishment due his sins and is also restored to God's personal favor. Thus justification includes the two elements of pardon and forgiveness.

PARDON

The sinner has broken the law and is under sentence of punishment. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The sinner has been tried and found guilty. He admits his guilt and blames no one but himself. The sentence has been announced. But God, the just Judge, announces that, on condition of the sinner's repentance and faith, he will be pardoned. The man meets the conditions, and thus goes free. God will not execute the punishment that

his sins deserve. The boy who sinned against his parents did two things: he personally displeased his father and also laid himself liable to the punishment which the father has set for disobedience. The father can pardon the boy and not inflict the punishment. But neither the boy nor his father is satisfied with that. The personal displeasure remains. A real reconciliation must remove the personal friction and secure perfect harmony. Justification is much more profound than pardon, in that it carries with it the personal element of forgiveness. The sin is pardoned, the man is forgiven.

FORGIVENESS

This is the profound element of justification, the restoration to personal favor with God. Any boy with the right spirit would rather take a whipping and have his father's good will and favor than escape the whipping and still be under his father's displeasure. So, in a normal con-

version, the sinner thinks more of getting right with God than of escaping punishment. This personal peace with God is the blessedness of justification. This is the source of

“The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.”

This peace is a real experience, as the song testifies :

“That sweet comfort was mine,
When the favor divine
I received through the blood of the Lamb;
When my heart first believed,
What a joy I received,
What a heaven in Jesus’s name!

“Jesus all the day long
Was my joy and my song :
O that all his salvation might see!
‘He hath loved me,’ I cried,
‘He hath suffered and died,
To redeem even rebels like me.’

“O the rapturous height
Of that holy delight
Which I felt in the life-giving blood!
Of my Saviour possessed,
I was perfectly blessed,
As if filled with the fullness of God.”

Justification is an act and a state. As an act, it is pardon and forgiveness; as a state, it is a continuation and an increase of the peaceful and happy relation with the personal God. The man is in the happy state, not because he is perfect, but because he is joined to Christ. God deals with him in this new way just as the father dealt with his son in a new way because of his new relation to his mother. Some one may say that the sinner needs something more than pardon, he needs to be actually made good. True, he needs something more than pardon, and he needs, at present, something much more profound than to be made good. He needs the personal love and friendship of God, and that which he most needs God gives him. A man cannot be in a state of friendship with God without having his whole life transformed into the likeness of his divine Friend. If a man is walking with God in personal communion day by day we can trust that man to come out at

the right place. God will give him a hunger for all that he needs, and then will abundantly supply the hunger from his own unexhaustible supply. The only trouble is that so many professed Christians do not constantly walk with God, constantly endeavoring to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, making no provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

This personal relation to God does not, however, of itself remove the depraved nature and the ruin of sin. It is not enough that we are personal friends with a great physician. The physician must actually apply the necessary remedies before the disease is removed. But the physician cannot heal us until we put ourselves in his care. So our new relation to God, secured by faith in Christ, gives to God an opportunity to do something that he could not do before; that is, actually heal the disease of sin. The act of faith which joins the man to Christ not only secures his pardon and forgiveness; it

also secures a renewal of his nature, a change of heart which transfers the center of the life from self to Christ and thus brings about true inward holiness. This change of heart is properly called a new birth, a regeneration. To it we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER XV

REGENERATION

SALVATION is a rescue from sin and from all the results of sin. Deserved punishment and the displeasure of God are two results of sin which are removed by justification. Sin also reacts upon the man himself and tends to destroy the whole moral nature. From the depravity of nature the sinner is delivered by the second element of the divine side of conversion, regeneration. Before taking up the subject in detail a statement by Dr. Curtis will throw light on the whole discussion:

“When a man is joined to Christ in holy allegiance by faith the Holy Spirit, who is always seeking to restore the man, finds a new opportunity in this new relation which the man sustains to Christ. The man’s new motive of loyalty to

Christ is filled with power and becomes the central organizing motive about which the Holy Spirit reconstructs the entire inner life. This is the man's new birth, or regeneration."

WHY A NEW BIRTH IS NECESSARY

"Ye must be born again." "Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Regeneration is made necessary by the fact that sin has degraded and partly destroyed the moral nature. The image of God is broken and the man cannot restore himself, since his loss is a loss of that very power of holding the total self in subjection to God. This depravity of nature is partly inherited and partly the result of personal sin. Sin produces a disease of

its own and aggravates a disease already present. This depraved state is:

1. A state of moral darkness.

Sin breaks off communication with God and interferes with the divine enlightenment. The sinner cannot tell what is right and what is wrong. He knows that there is a right and a wrong, but he has lost his bearings and, without a compass, wanders here and there in the fog, not knowing whether he is going toward the desired haven or toward the deadly breakers. This moral darkness is somewhat alleviated by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, but this enlightenment is very small except to those under the influence of the Gospel. So long as the man continues in sin the Spirit has no opportunity to remove that darkness.

2. A state of moral weakness.

The sinner cannot do the right even when he knows what the right is. He is not only in a fog without a compass; he has disabled his rudder and cannot sail a

course after he has decided upon one. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

3. A state of moral impurity.

The sinner has come to love a great many things which are sinful and degrading and hateful to God. He is not only adrift in a fog, part of the time he is glad of it. He does wrong because he loves darkness rather than light. One hour he decides to hunt up the harbor and to endeavor to reach it. The next hour he deliberately guides his sinking craft deeper into the fog and away from the harbor bell which began to sound in his ears. His love for right is not a day dawn, but only a single flash of lightning which is swallowed up in the deeper darkness of a wild and stormy night. The only power that can scatter that darkness is the power which in the beginning said, "Let there be light," and light was.

These three elements of the depraved state may all be summed up in one word,

unholy. The word holy has come to mean moral purity, but that is a derived and secondary meaning. A holy person is a person who demands of himself that every act, word, and thought be an expression of the total self. This means that his moral righteousness shall find expression in every activity of the personality, thus securing moral purity for every activity. As the word "holiness" is generally used, this effect of holiness is meant rather than the cause, which is the real holiness. This does very well for popular speech, but when theories of regeneration and sanctification are built on this figure of speech the result is both confusing and amusing.

The sinner is unholy. This means primarily that there is no one center that controls and entirely dominates his whole life. He is fragmentary. His acts are not an expression of his total self, but only of a part of himself—now this part, now that. If he tries to be good in one

respect he does not demand of himself that his purpose of goodness control him in all other respects. He has many unrelated centers of action, each working for itself. He has some righteous motives and some sinful motives. Sometimes he chooses the good motives. At other times he chooses the sinful motives. His nature is not organic. He has no center, no one great motive which entirely controls him. His moral system has no sun as a center of gravitation to bring other centers into subjection to itself. When he tries to be good he finds a large part of himself rebelling against such action. When he does evil he is still at war with himself. The petty strife of the feudal system has not given place to the settled government of a strong monarchy. This scattered, divided state is a result of sin. It is inherited depravity aggravated by personal sin. Since the man loves some wickedness, and has no adequate knowledge of right and wrong and no power to attain

the right even if he knew it, it is easily seen that without some outside power comes to his relief he can never be free from his sad condition. He is as a sailor who, in strange and dangerous waters, has steered his vessel into a dense and thickening fog, where with compass and rudder gone he flounders in utter helplessness. Unless some friendly pilot comes quickly to his aid, marks out his course, and restores both compass and rudder, a fatal wreck is both sure and irrevocable. Neither pilot, compass, nor rudder will avail a lost vessel when once it is broken and firmly settled in the mud.

THE NEW BIRTH SECURED BY FAITH

To the man in this unsettled, unholy state God comes and, by conviction of sin, shows him his sad condition and offers a rescue. The only thing that the man can do is to exercise faith; that is, to surrender himself in loyal trust to the Pilot. This act of faith is the man's first

move toward a real holiness; for the first time the man has given expression to his total self. Man is made in the image of God, having intellect, sensibility, will, and a moral nature. In sin only a part of the man is carried. Faith gathers up the whole man and commits it to God. By this decision and trust the whole man rejects sin and chooses God; he joins himself to Christ in a declaration of allegiance. A great and new center has come into his life. The man has with his whole nature chosen the motive of love and loyalty to Christ.

Three things immediately follow this act of faith:

1. The man is forgiven and comes into personal peace with God.
2. He is regenerated.
3. He is adopted into God's family.

Great emphasis is put on the fact that these three elements of the divine side of conversion immediately follow the act of faith. This emphasis is necessary since

some are teaching that a man may come to God by faith, asking for pardon and forgiveness, and receive it, and not be regenerated, or born again, until years afterward.

THE REGENERATE STATE

The fatal defect of the unregenerate state is that the life is not organic, there is no one center, no one great motive that entirely controls the whole man. Several good motives are present, but no one of them is great enough or total enough to meet the need and organize the whole life about itself, even if God should come and add his own power to that motive. Man's nature is never perfect until God is enthroned as supreme Ruler, and this need of God cannot be brought into subjection to something less than a complete surrender and trust in God such as faith affords. The act of faith which carries the total man in loving trust and loyalty to the very best the man knows is suffi-

ciently great and profound to meet the need. This presents to the Holy Spirit an opportunity he never before had, and he immediately fills that new center with a life and power which will enable it to reorganize the whole man about itself. If this new motive were left to itself it would have to take its chances with other good motives, and it might be overcome of evil. But God adds his own divine life to this motive, and the Holy Spirit tenderly nurtures it, and thus it has power to overcome the depravity and make the man holy. Thus the man is renewed, born again, becomes a new creation. His course is marked out, compass and rudder are restored, the friendly Pilot stands by ready to supply every need. This new center, full of divine life, will take up all other motives and bring them into subjection to the one motive of loyalty to Christ. If any of the motives are so bad that they cannot be related to the motive of loyalty to Christ they are destroyed, and cease to

exist as a part of that man. If the man loves anything which cannot be made a part of the love for Christ that love is killed, and the man comes to hate that which he once loved. Regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit in which he imparts a divine life which will entirely renovate the soul and bring all its powers into relation to Christ, thus making the man holy.

The renewal of the nature resulting from the impartation of power to the great new motive exactly meets the depravity resulting from sin.

1. It removes the moral darkness. Since the man has joined himself to Christ he has ceased trying to settle cases of right and wrong and follows Christ. "Paul with the old Pharisaic truth cuts a swath of destruction in the name of duty, haling men and women to prison. We find him one moment with a pocket full of documents, charts, plans, and specifications of what he shall do and how he shall

do it. The next moment the light flashes upon him, the Christ is before him, and his soul rushes forward with the cry, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?' He asks for no specifications, charts, or plans. He is ready to take sealed orders from the Christ to go where he wants him to go and do what he wants him to do." So long as he follows Christ he can do no wrong. In addition to this personal relation to Christ there is a quickening of the moral powers as a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. New opportunities are also given for spiritual enlightenment.

2. It removes the moral weakness. The decision of the will by which sin was rejected and God chosen has greatly weakened all evil motives and strengthened all good ones. The decision has also given a new power to the will itself. The impartation of divine life and the renewal resulting has given to the will a great victory. Every converted man finds him-

self with a new moral power which enables him to overcome sin. God's power is added to his own, and the loyalty to Christ gives him victory over all things displeasing to Christ.

3. It takes away the love for sinful things. The rejection of sin and the choice of God forever kills all desire toward some sins. It may not remove all love for evil things, but it does remove some, and the great love for Christ and the new relation to Christ sets the whole man fighting against all tendencies to sin, and they will soon lose their power if resisted. The powerful, Spirit-filled, new love takes the place of all former loves.

4. It removes the unholy state. The great and new center is endowed with a power which will enable it to organize the whole life about itself. The life becomes organic. The man becomes holy. This will be more carefully discussed in the chapter on "Christian Holiness."

Thus is seen the vital connection between faith and the divine side of conversion. It is not a formal condition, but a real and necessary part of the rescue. Man cannot have peace with God until he ceases his opposition to God. A mere declaration of pardon on God's part would not change the situation at all. It is of no use for God to impart a new life until there is something to impart it to, something sufficiently great to hold it. God does not put new wine in old bottles.

In discussing Christian holiness the state of entire sanctification should always be compared with and related to the regenerate state instead of the justified state. Justification is an act of pardon and a state of personal peace, fellowship, friendship, and loyalty to God. This state abides, and is never succeeded or weakened by another state. In regeneration a work is begun which will end in Christian holiness. That no one may

think that we are departing from Methodist teaching, this chapter will be closed with statements from three typical Methodist teachers. The statements are somewhat abridged, but represent their views in their own words :

STATEMENT BY JOHN WESLEY

“Justification and the new birth are in point of time inseparable from each other, yet they are easily distinguished as not being the same. God in justifying us does something *for* us; in begetting us again he does a work *in* us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children, by the latter our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one restores to the favor and the other to the image of God. Being born of God implies a vast inward change, a change wrought in the soul by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The new birth is the change wrought in the whole soul by the

almighty Spirit of God when it is 'created anew in Christ Jesus,' when it is 'renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.' In a word, it is that change whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the 'mind which was in Christ Jesus.' When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness begins; and thenceforward we are gradually 'to grow up in Him who is our head.' A child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time; afterward he gradually and slowly grows, till he attains to the stature of a man. In like manner a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation, therefore, which there is between our natural birth and our growth there is also between our new birth and our sanctification." (Sermon xlv, "The New Birth.")

STATEMENT BY JOHN MILEY

“The necessity for regeneration lies in the depravity of our nature; such a necessity can be met only by a divine operation within the moral nature which shall purify it and transform it into the moral likeness of the divine. As the depravity of the original parentage is transmitted through natural generation, so through regeneration we are transformed into the moral likeness of the Holy Spirit. By the new birth we receive the impress and likeness of the Holy Spirit. The regenerate state is a state of subjective holiness. It must be a state of subjective holiness because it is the result of an operation of the Holy Spirit which as really transforms the soul into the moral likeness of himself as the laws of nature determine the likeness of the offspring to its parentage. In regeneration the ‘old man is put off,’ not only as a corrupt nature but as an evil life; and the new man is put on, not only

by a perfection of the moral nature but also in the habit of a new life in righteousness and true holiness.

“We are justified and regenerated by the same act of faith. The two are coincident in time.” (*Systematic Theology*, vol. ii, “Regeneration.”)

STATEMENT BY RANDOLPH S. FOSTER

“Concurrently with pardon and forgiveness is a work done in the soul generally designated as regeneration, and variously characterized in the Scriptures as being ‘born again,’ created anew in Christ Jesus, etc. Regeneration has to do with the soul itself, the condition and state of its powers. Pardon, by which the soul is entirely purged of guilt, does not at all affect the abnormalcy (depravity, disease) of nature into which the soul had fallen, and which has acquired additional strength by indulgence. But, concurrently with pardon, God in the person of the Holy Ghost returns to and takes up his

loving and helpful abode in the soul from which guilt had expelled him, and by his presence and agency restores the lost equation, enables the soul to righteousness, rebuilds the shattered constitution, reduces usurpers to subjection, and reinstates the rightful Sovereign. The soul by this act is made normal. When the soul is forgiven guilt is removed. That is negative righteousness. When the soul is regenerated—that is, born of God—not only is sin removed but the principle of righteousness is implanted in it. That is positive righteousness. By the conjoint process the soul is made righteous.” (*Philosophy of Christian Experience*, lecture vi, p. 116, seq.)

CHAPTER XVI

ADOPTION

“ADOPTION is a legal term used by Paul to express in a striking way the new filial relation which a converted man has to God. Justification indicates that a man joined to Christ by faith has a new relation to the moral law; regeneration indicates the corresponding new relation to the Holy Spirit; adoption indicates the corresponding new relation to the family of God.”

“This family of God is a new spiritual organism, in fact, a new race, which is being organized about Christ our Saviour. The converted man is made a vital point in the vast communion of saints where God is fully realized as Father.”

“Thus, while the practical climax of

conversion is in Christian holiness, the climax in the philosophy of the divine plan is really in adoption."

The real significance of redemption cannot be felt without a clear conception of what is meant by the "family of God." If we can find out what God is trying to do with us we can the better work with God to secure the desired result. What, then, was God's purpose in creating man, and what is his purpose now? The Bible tells us that man was created a moral person, in the image of God, and that he was created in racial connection. "By noting this fact it is clear that the purpose of creation was to get a racial brotherhood of moral persons." What, then, is God's aim in redemption? Again let Dr. Curtis reply: "In creation God's aim was to get a racial brotherhood of holy persons; and in redemption the aim is to get such a brotherhood out of a race of sinful men. There are, it will be seen, two sides to this aim: the personal side, to get the holy

man, and the racial side, to get the holy brotherhood."

Thus, while God's primal purpose remains unchanged, the entrance of sin compelled him to change the method. Sin wrought a great injury both to the man and to the brotherhood. To the person it brought guilt, separation from God, and a deadly injury to the whole moral structure. Sin also broke up the organic brotherhood of the race, thus making of the race a complete failure, and on account of this failure the natural race by the method of physical death ceases to be. So there is a double need of redemption. On the one side, redemption is necessary that the man may have his sins forgiven, and his moral nature healed, and communion with God restored so that he may reach his sublime personal destiny. On the other side, redemption is necessary that "a new race may be made out of the disrupted members of the old Adamic race." The redemption in Christ exactly

covers this double necessity. We have seen in our study of the rescue how the sinner is forgiven and restored to communion with God, and how God has healed and renewed his injured moral nature. The adoption into God's family meets the second necessity for redemption. God is seeking to make of sinful men holy men, and to mold these saved men into a race, a brotherhood. The method of redemption is such that in rescuing the individual God is also securing the brotherhood. This will appear as the discussion proceeds. This new race or brotherhood is organized about the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Center, the Head. He stands for the race, and in a certain sense he is the race. He is the head, we are the members. He is the controlling mind and heart and will, we are instruments for his service. He is the vine, we are the branches. In order that Christ might have this vital relation to the race it was necessary for him to become a

member of it. This is the fundamental truth of the incarnation. The Son of God took on himself human nature, and became a member of that race, to the end that he might organize it about himself. In a very real sense Christ while upon earth was the new race and brotherhood all by himself. He lived, obeyed, suffered, as a member of the race and for it. Now with Christ as the Center, the Head of the race, the new spiritual organism is begun. The aim is to get men to join themselves to Christ and submit themselves to him that he may make them members of his body and organize them about himself. This union with Christ is secured by faith. Faith is a bond of allegiance, a vital bond which really makes the man a member of Christ just as the branch is a member of the vine. Thus, as soon as a man accepts Christ by faith, he becomes a member of the new race which is being organized about Christ. The new birth does not make a man a

member of the brotherhood. The union with Christ, the submission to him, makes the man a child of God, a member of the new race. That the man may be a worthy member he must be holy and reach his highest personal destiny. The new birth is necessary to holiness. A sinner is justified because he is joined to Christ. A sinner is regenerated because he is joined to Christ. A lost man becomes a member of God's family because he is joined to Christ. Thus, in securing holy men, God is securing the holy brotherhood.

God is striving with men, seeking to get them one by one to accept Christ and become members of the great brotherhood. Every man must make the decision for himself. Those who reject Christ not only do not obtain membership in the new race, they lose all racial connections. The person who cares only for self, who will not submit to God and join with others in love and fellowship, by the process of physical death is cut off

from all of his kind and is flung out into the awful loneliness of personal isolation.

To the new brotherhood God stands in the relation of Father. The entrance of sin made it necessary for God to assume for a while the attitude of a Ruler, but when the disturbance is entirely overcome God will return to his first and best relation of Father. Jesus is ever trying to teach us that God is our Father, and ever trying to teach us the filial spirit.

Growing out of this new relation to the family of God there are two closely related experiences which will be discussed under the heads of "Christian Fellowship" and "Christian Assurance."

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

THE relation of love and fellowship which obtains among all those who are true Christians is seldom treated as a part of Christian experience or as an element of personal salvation. But the fact is that this feeling is often the strongest and most real experience that comes to the new convert. We have seen that every one who accepts Christ becomes at once a member of the great brotherhood of the family of God. This adoption into God's family brings with it a true spirit of brotherly love which seizes hold of all other members and holds them in a keen personal interest. It is comparatively seldom that the experiences of repentance and faith are as vivid and well defined as in the ideal case which has been described. As a natural result of ignorance in spir-

itual things, and for other legitimate reasons, a conversion may have all the elements of a true rescue, according to the outline, and still be very vague and indefinite to the convert himself. In many cases the sinner would not be able to find his way through at all without a helping hand. Just here is seen the practical value of the Christian community, with its power of brotherhood and fellowship. The members of this brotherhood are always seeking to persuade men to accept Christ and become members of the family. As soon as a sinner begins to show an interest in salvation, and to seek after it, the brotherhood gathered about feel a great love for him and a peculiar interest in his particular case. The spirit of love and fellowship is felt by everyone within its reach, and is especially felt by the seeker after Christ. The Christian community in a very real sense identifies itself with the seeker and imparts its strength to him, and on the wings of prayer and faith

helps to bear him over to safe ground. How often in great revival meetings, and often in lesser meetings, has a sinner been helped and quickened by the love and sympathy of the church. The faith of the brotherhood increases and quickens the faith of the individual, and makes it clear and definite. Thus, while the experience of acceptance with God may at first be very weak and vague, the experience of the personal love and fellowship of the great brotherhood may be very strong and clear. In any case there is among those who love the Lord Jesus a spirit of fellowship which amounts to a real and definite experience. The weaker members are held by the strong in a spirit of watchful love, and their growth in grace and in the development of all Christian virtues is greatly increased by this spirit. Humanly speaking, many a convert would be lost to the church if it were not for the care and guidance of the brotherhood.

The social instinct which is deeply implanted in human nature is not only greatly emphasized and quickened by the Christian experience, but it is also fully met and satisfied in the Christian community. "The purpose is to have in the church a community where each person can get the profoundest fellowship in service and life. Modern socialism is not a vagary entire; it is based on a deep thing in man. Socialism is but a genuine hunger eating the wrong food. The real food is in the ideal of the Christian Church. Men think they want, as one has expressed it, the government to hold an umbrella over every man's head. They think they want a community of goods, but they really want a community of hearts. Let every man be sure that every other man would give his life to help him, and he is utterly satisfied. The way out of the modern peril is to bring back the Christian Church to the ideal of brotherhood in Christ our Lord. The Christian

religion completes man's life in a wonderful way. The personal moral process is completed by the Christian faith, but when it is completed all the personal isolation has disappeared. The one individual is saved, but not alone; he is saved by others and with others and for others. His own personal life is perfected; but he is left, at last, in vital, self-sacrificing relations with a mighty, organic brotherhood, a great multitude that no man can number."

The basis of this new relation lies in the fact that when man is joined to Christ he becomes a member of God's family and God sends the spirit of his own Son into his heart, so that he feels toward God and toward man exactly as God's own Son feels. The indwelling Jesus is "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

When one Christian meets another they meet as members of the family of God. It matters not how diverse their outward circumstances, nor of what nationality or

language they may be; the image of Christ in one recognizes the image of Christ in the other. "They laugh into each other's eyes," and hearts and faces glow with the glory of eternal fellowship. When the Wesleyan Methodist churches of Germany were made an organic part of the Methodist Episcopal Church the delegates to the conference for union were addressed by our own Bishop Goodsell. Speaking of their subjection to a Church of another land and another tongue, he said, "Do I seem like a foreigner to you?" Immediately those Germans sprang to their feet and, crowding around the bishop and throwing their arms about him, they cried, "Mein Bruder, mein Bruder!" Fellowship is a real element of Christian experience.

The Christian has a real and vital fellowship with Christ as a result of the union by faith, but it is not a part of the present plan to discuss that phase of experience. The fellowship of the Christian

community has been introduced because in the first place it is a real experience, and in the second place it has a vital bearing on the doctrine of Christian assurance.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

It is very important for each person to know whether or not at this present moment he is a member of God's family. There can be no satisfactory Christian life if there is vagueness at this point. If a man has valid assurance that he is a member of God's family he can be assured concerning all the other elements of his experience. The Holy Scriptures teach that there are two witnesses to the fact of adoption into God's family. These two witnesses are the man himself and the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

I. A converted man can be assured that he is a child of God by a logical inference from the facts furnished by his new life. The new life of union with

Christ has certain marks that distinguish it from the old life of sin. If these marks are present the man is living the Christian life and is a child of God. John says that "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Since the members of God's family have a profound love for one another, a man may be assured that he is one of the family if he has the family feeling and enjoys the family fellowship. Again, in the same chapter, John says that "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." If a man finds himself with a conscious power over sin and a love for righteousness that he has not previously felt he may reasonably infer that he has been born of God. In the Epistle to the Galatians Paul says that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." If a man finds these virtues present in his life he may logically infer that the Spirit dwelleth in him, and there-

fore that he is one of God's children. The Christian life furnishes the facts for its own identification. But this self-assurance is not of itself entirely satisfactory. The trouble is that it is likely to be weak or to fail altogether just at the time when most needed. In a time of great sorrow and affliction, or of very severe pain or temptation, when all the faculties of mind and soul are strained and weak, the man has neither the disposition nor the ability to examine his life and satisfy himself with inferences therefrom. He needs something more solid and substantial, something sure and unfailing, something that is not disturbed by his own moods and frailties. In such a time is felt the need of the Comforter, whose good pleasure it is to dwell in the heart and bear witness to the truth.

2. "A converted man can be assured that he is a child of God by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit witnessing with his spirit; that is, the Holy Spirit helps the

man to realize intuitively that God is his Father and that he is truly God's child."

When the man joined himself to Christ God accepted him as a child and sent into his heart the Spirit of his own Son, and the man intuitively feels toward God as God's own Son feels. This intuition may be very weak at first, but in a time of need, or in direct answer to prayer for a witness, the Holy Spirit comes and takes up the feeble intuition and puts his own great strength into it, and the man knows, with a knowledge that cannot be shaken, that God is his Father. The Christians to whom Paul wrote, many of them converted from paganism, found themselves with a deep consciousness that God was their Father and that they were his children. Paul informs them that they came by that knowledge, and were able to say, "Abba, Father," by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. The Christian may not know when nor how he came to consciousness or sonship, but he knows he

has it. In every hour of overwhelming affliction or temptation this deep consciousness of sonship in God's family abides strong and definite, as a rock beneath the feet. It holds us steady until we can gain a victory. This work of the Spirit brings the heavenly home into the human heart and makes loneliness and despair forever impossible. Anywhere in the universe the Christian is at home. He has a Father, a Brother, a great and honorable family. He can people any solitude with the forms of his beloved brethren, and on land or sea can lie down to rest in the arms of a loving Father. He is as certain of his Father as a bird is certain of the air, because he has a knowledge not learned of the wisdom of men, but by the Spirit of God.

This direct work of the Holy Spirit is the common privilege of all of God's children, regardless of training or circumstances. Opportunities for Christian work and teaching add greatly to a man's

ability to examine his own life and compare it with the pattern set forth in the Scriptures. But the feeble and the most ignorant may have the witness of the Spirit in all its strength if they are closely joined to Christ by faith.

The witness of the Spirit is known by its results. The work may be so silent that we may know nothing of it, but as a result of that work we live and feel and think toward God as toward a Father. The witness often comes in answer to a direct prayer for the witness. In such cases it is likely to come at a definite time and with considerable clearness. It might easily be mistaken for a "second blessing." In any case, it comes at some time to all who have faith in Christ.

Attention is called to the fact that the Spirit tells us that we are the sons of God; and not that we are forgiven, or regenerated. Since we are the sons of God these things have taken place; but the Spirit bears witness to the adoption, since that is

the fundamental thing. The aim of all religion is to bring man into a proper relation to the holy God. In adoption that proper relation is secured and God tells us of it. That knowledge brings peace and eternal rest.

Every Bible student must have stood often and long before that colossal statement by Paul: "I am not ashamed [confused, discomfited]; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." How did Paul's faith become knowledge? How may our faith become as sure as Paul's? We begin in earliest childhood with a dim idea of God, an intuition vague and beclouded, often but little more than a forgotten dream. It is a long journey from that beginning to Paul's confident "I know." After all, how does Paul know that he is not deceived? How can Paul distinguish his knowledge of God from an imagination which has deceived him into accepting it

as a reality, or from an error truly believed? A man may be entirely certain that he knows something and still be in error. The writer well remembers a man who knew beyond all doubt that men have but eleven ribs on the left side and that the place where the twelfth rib ought to be is filled with pleura. Neither argument nor evidence could shake him. He simply knew it, and he trusted that knowledge even against the evidence of his own eyes. How can I be sure that Paul's "I know" is not of the same kind? There are two thoughts which may help us to answer the question:

1. The Christian man is certain of God and of the reality of his spiritual life because he is personally satisfied with his trust. He began with a weak intuition of God. As his faith increased his intuition was cleared up. As he obeyed his conscience his moral nature took on new powers and God became more real to him. At last, when he found his whole moral

process completed by the Christian experience, he also found that all the longings of his nature were satisfied. He has built on his belief in God a structure which has withstood every storm. He must be founded on a Rock. He has thrown himself out upon his faith as an eagle flings himself into the air, and it has held him up. The young eagle believes he was made to fly; by and by he knows it. The man believes he was made for God; by and by he knows it. A man may be absolutely certain of a thing and still be in error. The error will quickly appear the moment he attempts to put his false knowledge into practice. We all remember the case of the tortoise that wanted to fly. A man might deceive himself into thinking he could walk on the water or fly from a mountain peak. He would speedily be convinced of his error if he should try to put his idea into practice. The Christian finds that his faith works well. More and more he trusts himself

to his faith, more and more he is satisfied with it. After a while he says with Paul, "I know." Experience has convinced him. He has drunk at a fountain whose waters have forever driven all thirst from his soul. For that reason he knows that he has found the fountain of eternal life.

2. "The Christian man is not alone in this experience. *He has a testing community.* At every turn of his thinking and feeling, in all the unfolding of his religious consciousness, he is bounded by his brotherhood—a peculiar company; all passing through the same typical experience; but this experience colored and modified by difference in mental capacity and training. Thus a person reaches certainty with every conviction tested and confirmed by his Christian brethren. The supreme test of Christian truth is not that it can be demonstrated, like a problem in mathematics, but that it satisfies every man who lives the unselfish and glowing life of the brotherhood of redemption."

A chemist working in his laboratory takes upon himself the work of making an acorn. He has material at hand. He gets the size, the shape, the color, and the flavor. The product looks like an acorn. Some might be deceived into believing it to be an acorn. The wise man knows better. It will not grow and develop into a tree. The real thing has eluded him. The secret of life he has not found. Several elements professing to contain the secret have been sent him, but they all fail. But in a strange book he reads of a new element which seems to meet his need. He puts it into his acorn, and, lo, it begins to grow. He makes another. It grows also. He makes a thousand, they all grow. He makes other seeds. The new element imparts the same power to them. They grow at home, abroad, everywhere, in any soil or any climate. He cannot prove that his products are alive, that he and all other men are not deceived by appearances. Nevertheless he is satis-

fied; he says, "I know I have found the secret of life." Men have been trying to make a life. They have failed, and are conscious of failure. A book appears saying that men are made alive by faith in God. Men test it and begin to live. They are satisfied. Others try it with the same result. It works everywhere, among all men. Finally they begin to say, with Paul, "I know whom I have believed." The result is more than knowledge; it is *eternal life*.

Thus is reached the first Christian goal. The rebellious man has become a loyal citizen of the kingdom of God. The rescue has passed into reconstruction. The man is loyal, God can make of him what he will. United to Christ, pardoned, forgiven, regenerated, adopted into God's family, conscious of sonship and of fellowship with the brethren, having put on the whole armor of God, he is ready to start for the second goal, Christian holiness.

CHAPTER XIX

CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

THE aim of this chapter is to set forth in a clear and definite manner the meaning of the words and of the experience of Christian holiness. It is hoped that the words may be freed from some of the confusion which has gathered about them as a result of partial and artificial treatment. The word "holy" has in common usage different meanings. It sometimes means "set apart to the service or worship of God; sacred, reserved from common or profane use." In this sense it is nearly identical with "sanctified." Thus we speak of the holy temple, the Holy Scriptures, the holy Sabbath, the holy sacrament, etc. In this sense it is proper to speak of the Christian at any stage of his experience as holy. The word "holy" is also used in a slightly different sense,

carrying the idea of being "clean, pure, free from sinful affections." Thus we speak of a holy love, a holy purpose. The motive of loyalty which a converted man has toward Christ is a holy motive. Since this motive is the greatest thing in the man's life, he may very properly be called a holy man if that particular meaning of the word be kept in mind when the word is used. But neither of these ideas is meant when the experience of Christian holiness is spoken of. The meaning there intended is "spiritually whole or sound." If this distinction is kept in mind much confusion as to the meaning of Christian holiness will disappear. Carelessness in the use of words is as sinful as any other form of moral looseness. As a preparation for the discussion now before us the reader is referred to the chapter on "Regeneration."

Regeneration is the beginning of holiness. Concerning it we observe:

1. It is a work done by the Holy Spirit.

2. It is coincident with justification in point of time, and is secured by and related to the same act of faith.

3. The necessity for regeneration lies in the depravity of the human nature; that is, in the ruin wrought by sin.

4. If regeneration meets this necessity it must impart or implant a life or a principle which will remove the depravity. The Holy Spirit secures this end by imparting to the motive of loyalty to Christ a power which enables it to organize the whole life about itself and bring every motive into subjection to love for Christ, thus making the life organic, whole, holy.

5. Regeneration is a complete and perfect work done by the Holy Spirit, done once for all. It does not need doing over again. It does not need any retouching to make it perfect. But this does not mean, and cannot mean, that the work which regeneration is to do is completed when it is begun. By the very nature of the case regeneration cannot be the im-

partation of a new life and also the work which that new life is to do.

6. The Holy Spirit will complete the work begun in regeneration as fast as the man gives him opportunity.

With these facts in mind we are ready to discuss Christian holiness.

“When regeneration is completed the result is perfection in the range of motives. This perfection is secured by so filling the motive of love for Christ with power that love alone becomes the central motive, in place of the old complex motive of loyalty to Christ. This exchange of motives may take place gradually or suddenly, but when the exchange is entirely made the man’s inner spiritual life is completely organic, because the central motive now for the first time constantly dominates all the smaller motives.”

As an enlargement of this statement the following points will be discussed: (1) The work to be done; (2) The method of doing it; (3) The time required.

1. The work to be done. In what respect does a holy man differ from a regenerate man?

The motive which constrains or impels a man who is joined to Christ in faith is a complex motive composed of love and duty. To this motive the Holy Spirit has given a peculiar life, enabling it to organize the whole spiritual man about itself. Sometimes, for some reason, the love part of the motive becomes weak, and the man must depend upon a feeling of duty rather than of love. This is a very unsafe situation, for a neglected duty weakens the whole moral structure and starts the man back toward the pit from which he was rescued. "Love is the only motive which can be relied upon for efficient and sure action." This life of intermittent love and duty is not satisfactory to a truly Christian man. He wants the work completed. The Holy Spirit must come and take the love part of that motive and fill it with life and power. It at once

takes such entire control of the man that his one motive of action is love for Christ. When this motive of love for Christ is filled with life and power all opposing motives are subordinated, and everything within that man's range is brought into subjection to love for Christ. The whole nature is organized about this motive of love, and the man has become organic, whole, holy. In the range of motive the man is perfect. In every moral act he expresses his total self, and since that self is controlled by love for Christ his actions have the quality of moral purity. As a result of being whole he is clean. He does not commit sin because all the motives that appeal to him are subordinated to his love for Christ. But these subordinate motives occasion many a test, and it is entirely possible for him to decide with one of them and thus commit sin. So long, however, as the love for Christ retains control the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit and

his whole life is full of righteousness and joy and peace. And yet the entire work of redemption is not completed. There is not yet perfection of knowledge or of conduct. These will come in due time. There is perfection in the realm of motive. That is all the perfection that is attained before death.

Thus, while the blessing of holiness is a second work of grace, it is not a "second blessing" in the sense in which those words are so often used. The second blessing is not needed because of any imperfection in the work of conversion, or because the man only asked for pardon. It does not make any difference what the man asked for. If he gave himself to Christ he was justified, regenerated, and adopted into God's family. The very perfection of the first work made necessary the second work to complete it. When the second blessing is properly understood we claim for it the sanction of Scripture, of common sense, and of experience.

The one word which correctly expresses this experience is "holiness." The use of any other word is the putting of a part for the whole, or of a result for the cause. As a result of the organization of the nature about the Lord Jesus Christ the powers of the soul are consecrated to his service, are set apart to a sacred use, and this idea is correctly expressed by the word "sanctification." The presence of motives to sin pollutes the whole moral life. When the reorganization of the nature forever cuts these out of the new man the result is "purity." The one great characteristic of the new life is that love rules supreme; hence the term "perfect love."

It is almost needless to say that holiness is not "maturity," or "Christian perfection," if anything more than perfection of motive is meant by those terms. There is abundant opportunity for a holy man to grow in grace. He will not attain perfection until the resurrection. Neither is

Christian holiness identical with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, nor with the endowment of power, as will be readily seen when once the nature of holiness is understood.

2. The means by which Christian holiness is secured.

(1) Love grows by expression. Every expression of love for Christ, by worship, meditation, testimony, Christian service, or sacrifice, reacts upon the love and increases its power and territory.

(2) Every duty done reacts upon the whole motive and increases and develops the love. So a man may aid himself toward the goal.

(3) The greatest and surest and quickest method is by a direct work of the Holy Spirit, who can come all at once and fill the motive of love with such a power that the work is at once complete. The Holy Spirit must really do the work, whether it be fast or slow. The man secures this work of the Spirit by faith. As the Holy

Spirit teaches the man he becomes conscious of his need on the one hand, and more and more conscious of the power of Christ on the other. He is sorry for his depraved condition and takes a new hold upon Christ. This practically amounts to repentance for depravity and faith in Christ to remove it. The man could not become conscious of his need until regeneration gave him a standard to measure himself by. He could not know Christ as he ought to know him until by faith he became loyal to him and became a member of the family. The preaching that will best promote holiness is that preaching which presents the Christ in all his attractive and lovely forms. If Christ is presented to the mind and heart he will himself create a hunger and thirst for righteousness. "The true preaching of the Gospel is to preach Christ, but the fashion of the day has been instead of this to attempt to convert by insisting on conversion" (Newman). He might well

have added that the way to secure holiness is to preach Christ rather than to insist upon holiness. Every sermon that exalts the Lord Jesus Christ is a sermon for the promotion of holiness.

By a life of faith in Christ and of active service for him the Holy Spirit is given opportunity to complete the work begun in regeneration. If in regeneration a life is imparted holiness is secured by the growth of that life, whether it be fast or slow. But that growth is not at all identical with or like the so-called "growth in grace."

3. The time required.

Life is measured not by time, but by depth and intensity. A man sometimes lives more in five minutes than in the five preceding years.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not
breaths;

In feelings, not in figures on a dial.

We should count time by heart-throbs. He most
lives

Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

Character is formed not by time, but by strength of purpose and intensity of thought and feeling. So much depth of purpose, so much strength and intensity of faith, will secure the reorganization and reconstruction of the soul about the Christ. If enough knowledge and faith are present at time of conversion to secure the needed pressure the work can be completed at once, or in five minutes. Or it may take five months or five years. It is a question of faith and consecration, and not of time. It is not a mechanical work, but a living, vital process wrought out by the united effort of the man and the Holy Spirit. In some cases the work is done gradually, in others suddenly. In either case the result is the same. A definite quantity of water will slake a definite amount of lime. If the water is all put on at once there is a great commotion and the work is done. If the water is put on a drop at a time, or if the lime is exposed to the moisture of the air, the same result

will be accomplished, but a much longer time is required. The quicker way, however, is generally the better.

Thus at some time before death the Christian reaches the second goal of the Christian life. He has not exhausted the riches of grace nor the result of redemption. The center of his life has been fixed; in God's own time the circumference will also be definitely drawn.

The most serious objection that has been brought against holiness as a "second" attainment is that it divides Christians into classes. If this objection were valid it would condemn the theory, but where a division exists it is caused not by the theory but the ignorance of those who hold it and those who oppose it. The Christian Church is a family with children of all ages and all stages of development. No properly governed family was ever divided by the attainments of any of its members. The Christian community consists of some who are in process of en-

lightenment and awakening, and some of fixed character and ripened powers, and of others in all the intermediate stages. They stand as a unit about the Lord Jesus, and nothing that increases love and consecration to him can divide the family. The doctrine of holiness here set forth will not cause division, but rather be a band of strength. Anything which causes a division in the church family may well be looked upon with suspicion.

Another objects, "Can a man be a Christian and at the same time be unholy?" That depends on what he means by the word "unholy." If he means that the man's life is still unorganized, and that love for Christ does not yet at every moment reign supreme, then the man is "unholy." If he means that the man is wicked, full of sin and rebellion against God, the man is not unholy. He is a friend of God, has the spirit of God within him, and is doing his best to please God. A building in the process of con-

struction is not a house, neither is it a pile of unrelated lumber; it is under the influence of a guiding, controlling plan. It will be a house when it is done. Why quarrel about words when the facts are so apparent and simple?

It matters not by what name it is called, there is an experience in which the life becomes fixed about the Lord Jesus and as a result love reigns supreme and all motives to sin disappear. If the attempt to explain that experience is not satisfactory the experience itself is.

“Jesus, thine all-victorious love
Shed in my heart abroad:
Then shall my feet no longer rove,
Rooted and fixed in God.

“O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire
And make the mountains flow!

“O that it now from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call;
Spirit of burning, come!

"Refining fire, go through my heart;
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.

"My steadfast soul, from falling free,
Shall then no longer move,
While Christ is all the world to me,
And all my heart is love."

CHAPTER XX

RESCUED FOR SERVICE

It is very probable that there are some who will raise the objection that this treatment of redemption pays too much attention to the individual and not enough to society. It is hard for one man to see all sides of the truth, and especially hard to hold facts and events and experiences in their proper relation. Very recently *The Pilgrim's Progress* was severely criticised because of its personal element, and the claim was made that it fostered self-pride and self-consciousness and spiritual narrowness. The same authority has also assured us that it is a matter of small moment whether we are individually virtuous or sinful. Our great work is "to think about others." It is well to remember that the first and the greatest

service which a man can render his fellows is to be absolutely clean and sound himself. Personal virtue gives to service an abiding and truly helpful quality utterly unknown to the mere generosity which always thinks of others first. The man who decides to serve men as a healer of disease can best render that service, not by going at once at it, but by first giving himself long years of personal preparation. For many years he works, training and developing his powers. Other years he spends in directing his trained powers to the study of medicine. He can best serve men by developing himself. So the Christian rescue begins with the one man. The individual is the point of attack and the real element of power. Christianity prepares men for the highest and noblest and completest service by preparing the man. This is an individual task which it is folly to ignore. The first and best service which Bunyan's Christian could render to the City of Destruction

tion was to get out of the city and stay out. Christianity does not ignore or belittle the importance of the individual, but forever insists on personal holiness. The one man is never swallowed up in the great multitude of God's family. "He knoweth his sheep by name." Each man must make a definite personal contribution to the final consummation, and his first and last task is to hold fast to his individual personality, that he may have somewhat to give.

But, while Christianity rescues and develops the individual as though he were the only man, it rescues and develops him for the kingdom and not for himself. The personal aim is to prepare a perfect Christian character, but that is not the end. The character is a preparation for service. The one duty of the Christian is to serve God and man with all his ransomed powers. That is the great calling whereunto we are called. That makes us like God, who thought it not a thing to be prized to

sit in all the solitary dignity of majestic and eternal holiness, but who emptied himself, pouring out all his powers, into the universe and upon man in one long and perfect service. It is God's delight to give, and give, and give. He is the great Helper, the great Servant, the great Burden Bearer of the universe. The Christian is to be like him, holy in character, as a preparation for service. If there were absolutely nothing in existence except God his character would be a matter of small consequence. But, since God will work and do things, since he made man and will not let him alone, it is of the greatest importance that God be absolutely holy. Just so, since the Christian is a member of society, his personal virtue is a matter of the greatest importance. Character alone makes true service. "Thus the personal moral process is completed by the Christian faith, but when it is completed all personal isolation has disappeared. The one individual is saved,

but not alone; he is saved by others, and with others, and for others. His own personal life is perfected, but he is left at last in vital, self-sacrificing relations with a mighty organic brotherhood." The great law of life, here and hereafter, is the law of service. "A Christian is God's knight-errant in the earth, sworn to purity in heart and purpose and to fealty to society and to the common weal of all the world." The Christian religion alone furnishes the power and the motives for such service. The goal of the individual is service. Service is also the goal of redeemed society.

"I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him,

Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and SERVE him day and night in his temple."

